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WORKS

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WITH

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EIGHTH EDITION IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

CONTAINING

I. A Treatise concerning Religious Affections.
II. Narrative of Surprising Conversions.
III. Thoughts on the Revival in New England.
IV. An Attempt to promote Explicit Agreement in Extraordinary Prayer.
V. Concerning the Perseverance of Saints.
VI. On the notion of the Pre-existence of Christ's Human Soul.
VII. Mysteries of Scripture.
VIII. Observations upon particular Passages of Scripture.
IX. Theological Questions.
X. Six Occasional Sermons.

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A TREATISE

CONCERNING

RELIGIOUS AFFECTIONS.

IN THREE PARTS.

INTRODUCTION.

THERE is no question whatsoever, that is of greater importance to mankind, and that it more concerns every individual person to be well resolved in, than this: *What are the distinguishing qualifications of those that are in favor with God, and entitled to his eternal rewards?* Or, which comes to the same thing, *What is the nature of true religion? And wherein do lie the distinguishing notes of that virtue and holiness that is acceptable in the sight of God?* But though it be of such importance, and though we have clear and abundant light in the word of God to direct us in this matter, yet there is no one point, wherein professing Christians do more differ one from another. It would be endless to reckon up the variety of opinions in this point, that divide the Christian world; making manifest the truth of that declaration of our Saviour, "Strait is the gate and narrow is the way, that leads to life, and few there be that find it."

The consideration of these things has long engaged me to attend to this matter, with the utmost diligence and care, and exactness of search and inquiry, that I have been capable of. It is a subject on which my mind has been peculiarly intent, ever since I first entered on the study of divinity. But as to the success of my inquiries, it must be left to the judgment of the reader of the following treatise.

I am sensible it is much more difficult to judge impartially of that which is the subject of this discourse, in the midst of the dust and smoke of such a state of controversy, as this land is now in, about things of this nature. As it is more difficult to write impartially, so it is more difficult to read impartially. Many will probably be hurt in their spirits, to find so much that appertains to religious affection, here condemned: and perhaps indignation and contempt will be excited in others by finding so much here justified and approved. And it may be, some will be ready to charge me with inconsistence with myself, in so much approving some things, and so much condemning others; as I have found this has always been objected to by some, ever since the beginning of our late controversies about religion. It is a hard thing to be a hearty zealous friend of what has been good and glorious, in the late extraordinary appearances, and to rejoice much in it; and at the same time to see the evil and pernicious tendency of what has been bad, and earnestly to oppose that. But yet, I am humbly but fully persuaded, we shall never be in the way of truth, nor go on in a way acceptable to God, and tending to the advancement of Christ's kingdom, till we do so. There is indeed something very mysterious in it, that so much good, and so much bad, should be mixed together in the church of God; as it is a mysterious thing, and what has puzzled and amazed many a good Christian, that there should be that which is so divine and precious, as the saving grace of God, and the new and divine nature dwelling in the same heart, with so much corruption, hypocrisy, and iniquity, in a particular saint. Yet neither of these is more mysterious than real. And neither of them is a new or rare thing. It is no new thing, that much false religion should prevail, at a time of great reviving of true religion; and that at such a time multitudes of hypocrites should spring up among true saints. It was so in that great reformation, and revival of religion, that was in Josiah's time; as appears by Jer. iii. 10, and iv. 3, 4, and also by the great apostasy that there was in the land, so soon after his reign. So

it was in that great outpouring of the Spirit upon the Jews, that was in the days of John the Baptist; as appears by the great apostasy of that people so soon after so general an awakening, and the temporary religious comforts and joys of many: John v. 35, "Ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light." So it was in those great commotions that were among the multitude, occasioned by the preaching of Jesus Christ; of the many that were then called, but few were chosen; of the multitude that were roused and affected by his preaching, and at one time or other appeared mightily engaged, full of admiration of Christ, and elevated with joy, but few were true disciples, that stood the shock of the great trials that came afterwards, and endured to the end. Many were like the stony ground, or thorny ground; and but few, comparatively, like the good ground. Of the whole heap that was gathered great part was chaff, that the wind afterwards drove away; and the heap of wheat that was left, was comparatively small; as appears abundantly, by the history of the New Testament. So it was in that great outpouring of the Spirit that was in the apostles' days; as appears by Matth. xxiv. 10—13. Gal. iii. 1, and iv. 11, 15. Phil. ii. 21, and iii. 18, 19, and the two epistles to the Corinthians, and many other parts of the New Testament. And so it was in the great reformation from Popery. It appears plainly to have been in the visible church of God, in times of great reviving of religion, from time to time, as it is with the fruit trees in the spring; there are a multitude of blossoms, all of which appear fair and beautiful, and there is a promising appearance of young fruits; but many of them are but of short continuance; they soon fall off, and never come to maturity.

Not that it is to be supposed that it will always be so; for though there never will, in this world, be an entire purity, either in particular saints, in a perfect freedom from mixtures of corruption; or in the church of God, without any mixture of hypocrites with saints, and counterfeit religion, and false appearances of grace with true religion, and real holiness: yet it is evident, that there will come a time of much greater purity in the church of God, than has been in ages past; it is plain by these texts of Scripture, Isa. lii. 1. Ezek. xliv. 6, 7, Joel iii. 17. Zech. xiv. 21. Psal. lxix. 32, 35, 36. Isa. xxxv. 8, 10, chap. iv. 3, 4. Ezek. xx. 38. Psal. xxxvii. 9, 10, 21, 29. And one great reason of it will be that at that time God will give much greater light to his people, to distinguish between true religion and its counterfeits. Mal. iii. 3, "And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness." With ver. 18, which is a continuation of the prophecy of the same happy times. "Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked; between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not."

It is by the mixture of counterfeit religion with true, not discerned and distinguished, that the devil has had his greatest advantage against the cause and kingdom of Christ, all along hitherto. It is by this means, principally, that he has prevailed against all revivings of religion, that ever have been, since the first founding of the Christian church. By this, he hurt the cause of Christianity, in and after the apostolic age, much more than by all the persecutions of both Jews and Heathens. The apostles, in all their epistles, show themselves much more concerned at the former mischief, than the latter. By this, Satan prevailed against the reformation, began by Luther, Zuinglius, &c., to put a stop to its progress, and bring it into disgrace; ten times more, than by all those bloody, cruel, and before unheard of persecutions of the church of Rome. By this, principally, has he prevailed against revivals of religion, that have been in our nation since the reformation. By this he prevailed against New England, to quench the love and spoil the joy of her espousals, about a hundred years ago. And I think, I have had opportunity enough to see plainly that by this the devil has prevailed against the late great revival of religion in New England, so happy and promising in its beginning. Here, most evidently, has been the main advantage Satan has had against us; by this he has foiled us. It is by this means, that the daughter of Zion in this land now lies on the ground, in such piteous circumstances as we now behold her; with her garments rent, her face disfigured, her nakedness exposed, her limbs broken, and weltering in the blood of her own wounds, and in no wise able to arise; and this, so quickly after her late great joys and hopes: Lam. i. 17, "Zion spreadeth forth her hands, and there is none to comfort her: the Lord hath commanded concerning Jacob, that his adversaries shall be round about him: Jerusalem is as a menstruous woman among them." I have seen the devil prevail the same way, against two great revivings of religion in this country. Satan goes on with mankind, as he began with them. He prevailed against our first parents, and cast them out of par-

adise, and suddenly brought all their happiness and glory to an end, by appearing to be a friend to their happy paradisaic state, and pretending to advance it to higher degrees. So the same cunning serpent, that beguiled Eve through his subtilty, by perverting us from the simplicity that is in Christ, hath suddenly prevailed to deprive us of that fair prospect, we had a little while ago, of a kind of paradisaic state of the church of God in New England.

After religion has revived in the church of God, and enemies appear, people that are engaged to defend its cause, are commonly most exposed, where they are least sensible of danger. While they are wholly intent upon the opposition that appears openly before them, to make head against that, and do neglect carefully to look all around them, the devil comes behind them, and gives a fatal stab unseen; and has opportunity to give a more home stroke, and wound the deeper, because he strikes at his leisure, and according to his pleasure, being obstructed by no guard or resistance.

And so it is ever likely to be in the church, whenever religion revives remarkably, till we have learned well to distinguish between true and false religion, between saving affections and experiences, and those manifold fair shows, and glistering appearances, by which they are counterfeited; the consequences of which, when they are not distinguished, are often inexpressibly dreadful. By this means, the devil gratifies himself, by bringing it to pass, that that should be offered to God, by multitudes, under a notion of a pleasing acceptable service to him, that is indeed above all things abominable to him. By this means he deceives great multitudes about the state of their souls; making them think they are something, when they are nothing; and so eternally undoes them; and not only so, but establishes many in a strong confidence of their eminent holiness, who are in God's sight some of the vilest of hypocrites. By this means, he many ways damps and wounds religion in the hearts of the saints, obscures and deforms it by corrupt mixtures, causes their religious affections wofully to degenerate, and sometimes, for a considerable time, to be like the manna that bred worms and stank; and dreadfully ensnares and confounds the minds of others of the saints, and brings them into great difficulties and temptation, and entangles them in a wilderness, out of which they can by no means extricate themselves. By this means, Satan mightily encourages the hearts of open enemies of religion, and strengthens their hands, and fills them with weapons, and makes strong their fortresses; when, at the same time, religion and the church of God lie exposed to them, as a city without walls. By this means, he brings it to pass, that men work wickedness under a notion of doing God service, and so sin without restraint, yea with earnest forwardness and zeal, and with all their might. By this means, he brings in even the friends of religion, insensibly to themselves, to do the work of enemies, by destroying religion in a far more effectual manner than open enemies can do, under a notion of advancing it. By this means the devil scatters the flock of Christ, and sets them one against another, and that with great heat of spirit, under a notion of zeal for God; and religion, by degrees, degenerates into vain jangling; and during the strife, Satan leads both parties far out of the right way, driving each to great extremes, one on the right hand, and the other on the left, according as he finds they are most inclined, or most easily moved and swayed, till the right path in the middle is almost wholly neglected. And in the midst of this confusion, the devil has great opportunity to advance his own interest, and make it strong in ways innumerable, and get the government of all into his own hands, and work his own will. And by what is seen of the terrible consequences of this counterfeit religion, when not distinguished from true religion, God's people in general have their minds unhinged and unsettled in things of religion, and know not where to set their foot, or what to think or do; and many are brought into doubts, whether there be any thing in religion; and heresy, and infidelity, and atheism greatly prevail.

Therefore it greatly concerns us to use our utmost endeavors clearly to discern, and have it well settled and established, wherein true religion does consist. Till this be done, it may be expected, that great revivings of religion will be but of short continuance; till this be done, there is but little good to be expected of all our warm debates, in conversation and from the press, not knowing clearly and distinctly what we ought to contend for.

My design is to contribute my mite, and use my best (however feeble) endeavors to this end, in the ensuing treatise; wherein it must be noted, that my design is somewhat diverse from the design of what I have formerly published, which was to show the *distinguishing marks of a work of the Spirit of God*, including both his common and saving operations; but what I aim at now, is to show the nature and signs of the

gracious operations of God's Spirit, by which they are to be distinguished from all things whatsoever, that the minds of men are the subjects of, which are not of a saving nature. If I have succeeded, in this my aim, in any tolerable measure, I hope it will tend to promote the interest of religion. And whether I have succeeded to bring any light to this subject or no, and however my attempts may be reproached in these captious and censorious times, I hope in the mercy of a gracious God, for the acceptance of the sincerity of my endeavors; and hope also for the candor and prayers of the true followers of the meek and charitable Lamb of God.

THEOLOGICAL

RELIGIOUS AFFECTIONS.

PART I.

CONCERNING THE NATURE OF THE AFFECTIONS, AND THEIR IMPORTANCE IN RELIGION.

1 Peter i. 8.—Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.

In these words, the apostle represents the state of the minds of the Christians he wrote to, under the persecutions they were then the subjects of. These persecutions are what he has respect to, in the two preceding verses, when he speaks of *the trial of their faith*, and of *their being in heaviness through manifold temptations*.

Such trials are of threefold benefit to true religion. Hereby the truth of it is manifested, and it appears to be indeed true religion; they, above all other things, have a tendency to distinguish between true religion and false, and to cause the difference between them evidently to appear. Hence they are called by the name of *trials*, in the verse nextly preceding the text, and in innumerable other places; they try the faith and religion of professors, of what sort it is, as apparent gold is tried in the fire, and manifested, whether it be true gold or no. And the faith of true Christians being thus tried and proved to be true, is "found to praise, and honor, and glory," as in that preceding verse.

And then, these trials are of further benefit to true religion; they not only manifest the truth of it, but they make its genuine beauty and amiableness remarkably to appear. True virtue never appears so lovely, as when it is most oppressed; and the divine excellency of real Christianity, is never exhibited with such advantage, as when under the greatest trials: then it is that true faith appears much more precious than gold! And upon this account is "found to praise, and honor, and glory."

And again, another benefit that such trials are of to true religion, is, that they purify and increase it. They not only manifest it to be true, but also tend to refine it, and deliver it from those mixtures of that which is false, which encumber and impede it; that nothing may be left but that which is true. They tend to cause the amiableness of true religion to appear to the best advantage, as was before observed; and not only so, but they tend to increase its beauty, by establishing and confirming it, and making it more lively and vigorous, and purifying it from those things that obscured its lustre and glory. As gold that is tried in the fire, is purged from its alloy, and all remainders of dross, and comes forth more solid and beautiful; so true faith being tried as gold is tried in the fire, becomes more precious, and thus also is "found unto praise, and honor, and

glory." The apostle seems to have respect to each of these benefits, that persecutions are of to true religion, in the verse preceding the text.

And in the text, the apostle observes how true religion operated in the Christians he wrote to, under their persecutions, whereby these benefits of persecution appeared in them; or what manner of operation of true religion, in them, it was, whereby their religion, under persecution, was manifested to be true religion, and eminently appeared in the genuine beauty and amiableness of true religion, and also appeared to be increased and purified, and so was like to be "found unto praise, and honor, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ." And there were two kinds of operation, or exercise of true religion, in them, under their sufferings, that the apostle takes notice of in the text, wherein these benefits appeared.

1. *Love to Christ:* "Whom having not yet seen, ye love." The world was ready to wonder, what strange principle it was, that influenced them to expose themselves to so great sufferings, to forsake the things that were seen, and renounce all that was dear and pleasant, which was the object of sense. They seemed to the men of the world about them, as though they were beside themselves, and to act as though they hated themselves; there was nothing in their view, that could induce them thus to suffer, and support them under, and carry them through such trials. But although there was nothing that was seen, nothing that the world saw, or that the Christians themselves ever saw with their bodily eyes, that thus influenced and supported them, yet they had a supernatural principle of love to something unseen; they loved Jesus Christ, for they saw him spiritually whom the world saw not, and whom they themselves had never seen with bodily eyes.

2. *Joy in Christ.* Though their outward sufferings were very grievous, yet their inward spiritual joys were greater than their sufferings; and these supported them, and enabled them to suffer with cheerfulness.

There are two things which the apostle takes notice of in the text concerning this joy. 1. The manner in which it rises, the way in which Christ, though unseen, is the foundation of it, viz., by faith; which is the evidence of things not seen: "In whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice." 2. The nature of this joy; "unspeakable and full of glory." Unspeakable in the kind of it; very different from worldly joys, and carnal delights; of a vastly more pure, sublime, and heavenly nature, being something supernatural, and truly divine, and so ineffably excellent; the sublimity and exquisite sweetness of which, there were no words to set forth. Unspeakable also in degree; it pleasing God to give them this holy joy, with a liberal hand, and in large measure, in their state of persecution.

Their joy was full of glory. Although the joy was unspeakable, and no words were sufficient to describe it, yet something might be said of it, and no words more fit to represent its excellency than these, that it was *full of glory;* or, as it is in the original, *glorified joy.* In rejoicing with this joy, their minds were filled, as it were, with a glorious brightness, and their natures exalted and perfected. It was a most worthy, noble rejoicing, that did not corrupt and debase the mind, as many carnal joys do; but did greatly beautify and dignify it; it was a prelibation of the joy of heaven, that raised their minds to a degree of heavenly blessedness; it filled their minds with the light of God's glory, and made themselves to shine with some communication of that glory.

Hence the proposition or doctrine, that I would raise from these words, is this:

Doctrine. *True religion, in great part, consists in holy affections.*

We see that the apostle, in observing and remarking the operations and ex-

ercises of religion in the Christians he wrote to, wherein their religion appeared to be true and of the right kind, when it had its greatest trial of what sort it was, being tried by persecution as gold is tried in the fire, and when their religion not only proved true, but was most pure, and cleansed from its dross and mixtures of that which was not true, and when religion appeared in them most in its genuine excellency and native beauty, and was found to praise, and honor, and glory; he singles out the religious affections of *love* and *joy*, that were then in exercise in them: these are the exercises of religion he takes notice of, wherein their religion did thus appear true and pure, and in its proper glory. Here I would,

1. Show what is intended by the affections.

2. Observe some things which make it evident, that a great part of true religion lies in the affections.

I. It may be inquired, what the affections of the mind are?

I answer: The affections are no other than the more vigorous and sensible exercises of the inclination and will of the soul.

God has endued the soul with two faculties: one is that by which it is capable of perception and speculation, or by which it discerns, and views, and judges of things; which is called the understanding. The other faculty is that by which the soul does not merely perceive and view things, but is some way inclined with respect to the things it views or considers; either is inclined *to* them, or is disinclined and averse *from* them; or is the faculty by which the soul does not behold things, as an indifferent unaffected spectator, but either as liking or disliking, pleased or displeased, approving or rejecting. This faculty is called by various names; it is sometimes called the *inclination:* and, as it has respect to the actions that are determined and governed by it, is called the *will:* and the mind, with regard to the exercises of this faculty, is often called the *heart.*

The exercise of this faculty are of two sorts; either those by which the soul is carried out towards the things that are in view, in approving of them, being pleased with them, and inclined to them; or those in which the soul opposes the things that are in view, in disapproving of them, and in being displeased with them, averse from them, and rejecting them.

And as the exercises of the inclination and will of the soul are various in their kinds, so they are much more various in their degrees. There are some exercises of pleasedness or displeasedness, inclination or disinclination, wherein the soul is carried but a little beyond a state of perfect indifference.—And there are other degrees above this, wherein the approbation or dislike, pleasedness or aversion, are stronger, wherein we may rise higher and higher, till the soul comes to act vigorously and sensibly, and the actings of the soul are with that strength, that (through the laws of the union which the Creator has fixed between the soul and the body) the motion of the blood and animal spirits begins to be sensibly altered; whence oftentimes arises some bodily sensation, especially about the heart and vitals, that are the fountain of the fluids of the body: from whence it comes to pass, that the mind, with regard to the exercises of this faculty, perhaps in all nations and ages, is called the *heart.* And, it is to be noted, that they are these more vigorous and sensible exercises of this faculty that are called the *affections.*

The will, and the affections of the soul, are not two faculties; the affections are not essentially distinct from the will, nor do they differ from the mere actings of the will, and inclination of the soul, but only in the liveliness and sensibleness of exercise.

It must be confessed, that language is here somewhat imperfect, and th meaning of words in a considerable measure loose and unfixed, and not precise ly limited by custom, which governs the use of language. In some sense, th affection of the soul differs nothing at all from the will and inclination, and th will never is in any exercise any further than it is affected; it is not moved ou of a state of perfect indifference, any otherwise than as it is affected one wa or other, and acts nothing any further. But yet there are many actings of th will and inclination, that are not so commonly called *affections:* in every thing we do, wherein we act voluntarily, there is an exercise of the will and inclina tion; it is our inclination that governs us in our actions; but all the actings o the inclination and will, in all our common actions of life, are not ordinarily called affections. Yet, what are commonly called affections are not essentially different from them, but only in the degree and manner of exercise. In every act of the will whatsoever, the soul either likes or dislikes, is either inclined or disinclined to what is in view: these are not essentially different from those affections of love and hatred: that liking or inclination of the soul to a thing, if it be in a high degree, and be vigorous and lively, is the very same thing with the affection of love; and that disliking and disinclining, if in a greater degree, is the very same with hatred. In every act of the will for, or towards something not present, the soul is in some degree inclined to that thing; and that inclination, if in a considerable degree, is the very same with the affection of desire. And in every degree of the act of the will, wherein the soul approves of something present, there is a degree of pleasedness; and that pleasedness, if it be in a considerable degree, is the very same with the affections of joy or delight. And if the will disapproves of what is present, the soul is in some degree displeased, and if that displeasedness be great, it is the very same with the affection of grief or sorrow.

Such seems to be our nature, and such the laws of the union of soul and body, that there never is in any case whatsoever, any lively and vigorous exercise of the will or inclination of the soul, without some effect upon the body, in some alteration of the motion of its fluids, and especially of the animal spirits. And, on the other hand, from the same laws of the union of the soul and body, the constitution of the body, and the motion of its fluids, may promote the exercise of the affections. But yet it is not the body, but the mind only, that is the proper seat of the affections. The body of man is no more capable of being really the subject of love or hatred, joy or sorrow, fear or hope, than the body of a tree, or than the same body of man is capable of thinking and understanding. As it is the soul only that has ideas, so it is the soul only that is pleased or displeased with its ideas. As it is the soul only that thinks, so it is the soul only that loves or hates, rejoices or is grieved at what it thinks of. Nor are these motions of the animal spirits, and fluids of the body, any thing properly belonging to the nature of the affections, though they always accompany them, in the present state; but are only effects or concomitants of the affections that are entirely distinct from the affections themselves, and no way essential to them; so that an unbodied spirit may be as capable of love and hatred, joy or sorrow, hope or fear, or other affections, as one that is united to a body.

The affections and passions are frequently spoken of as the same; and yet in the more common use of speech, there is in some respect a difference; and affection is a word that in its ordinary signification, seems to be something more extensive than passion, being used for all vigorous lively actings of the will or inclination; but passion for those that are more sudden, and whose effects on the animal spirits are more violent, and the mind more overpowered, and less in its own command

As all the exercises of the inclination and will, are either in approving and liking, or disapproving and rejecting; so the affections are of two sorts; they are those by which the soul is carried out to what is in view, cleaving to it, or seeking it; or those by which it is averse from it, and opposes it.

Of the former sort are love, desire, hope, joy, gratitude, complacence. Of the latter kind are hatred, fear, anger, grief, and such like; which it is needless now to stand particularly to define.

And there are some affections wherein there is a composition of each of the aforementioned kinds of actings of the will; as in the affection of *pity*, there is something of the former kind, towards the person suffering, and something of the latter towards what he suffers. And so in zeal, there is in it high approbation of some person or thing, together with vigorous opposition to what is conceived to be contrary to it.

There are other mixed affections that might be also mentioned, but I hasten to,

II. The second thing proposed, which was to observe some things that render it evident, that true religion, in great part consists in the affections. And here,

1. What has been said of the nature of the affections makes this evident, and may be sufficient, without adding any thing further, to put this matter out of doubt; for who will deny that true religion consists in a great measure, in vigorous and lively actings of the inclination and will of the soul, or the fervent exercises of the heart?

That religion which God requires, and will accept, does not consist in weak, dull, and lifeless wishes, raising us but a little above a state of indifference: God, in his word, greatly insists upon it, that we be good in earnest, "fervent in spirit," and our hearts vigorously engaged in religion: Rom. xii. 11, "Be ye fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." Deut. x. 12, "And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul?" and chap. vi. 4, 6, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy might." It is such a fervent vigorous engagedness of the heart in religion, that is the fruit of a real circumcision of the heart, or true regeneration, and that has the promises of life; Deut. xxx. 6, "And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live."

If we be not in good earnest in religion, and our wills and inclinations be not strongly exercised, we are nothing. The things of religion are so great, that there can be no suitableness in the exercises of our hearts, to their nature and importance, unless they be lively and powerful. In nothing is vigor in the actings of our inclinations so requisite, as in religion; and in nothing is lukewarmness so odious. True religion is evermore a powerful thing; and the power of it appears, in the first place in the inward exercises of it in the heart, where is the principal and original seat of it. Hence true religion is called the *power of godliness*, in distinction from the external appearances of it, that are the *form* of it, 2 Tim. iii. 5: "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power of it." The Spirit of God, in those that have sound and solid religion, is a spirit of powerful holy affection; and therefore, God is said "to have given the Spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind," 2 Tim. i. 7. And such, when they receive the Spirit of God, in his sanctifying and saving influences, are said to be "baptized with the Holy Ghost, and with fire;" by reason of the

power and fervor of those exercises the Spirit of God excites in their hearts, whereby their hearts, when grace is in exercise, may be said to "burn within them;" as is said of the disciples, Luke xxiv. 32.

The business of religion is from time to time compared to those exercises, wherein men are wont to have their hearts and strength greatly exercised and engaged, such as running, wrestling or agonizing for a great prize or crown, and fighting with strong enemies that seek our lives, and warring as those, that by violence take a city or kingdom.

And though true grace has various degrees, and there are some that are but babes in Christ, in whom the exercise of the inclination and will, towards divine and heavenly things, is comparatively weak; yet every one that has the power of godliness in his heart, has his inclinations and heart exercised towards God and divine things, with such strength and vigor that these holy exercises do prevail in him above all carnal or natural affections, and are effectual to overcome them: for every true disciple of Christ "loves him above father or mother, wife and children, brethren and sisters, houses and lands: yea, than his own life." From hence it follows, that wherever true religion is, there are vigorous exercises of the inclination and will towards divine objects: but by what was said before, the vigorous, lively, and sensible exercises of the will, are no other than the affections of the soul.

2. The Author of the human nature has not only given affections to men, but has made them very much the spring of men's actions. As the affections do not only necessarily belong to the human nature, but are a very great part of it; so (inasmuch as by regeneration persons are renewed in the whole man, and sanctified throughout) holy affections do not only necessarily belong to true religion, but are a very great part of it. And as true religion is of a practical nature, and God hath so constituted the human nature, that the affections are very much the spring of men's actions, this also shows, that true religion must consist very much in the affections.

Such is man's nature, that he is very inactive, any otherwise than he is influenced by some affection, either love or hatred, desire, hope, fear, or some other. These affections we see to be the springs that set men agoing, in all the affairs of life, and engage them in all their pursuits: these are the things that put men forward, and carry them along, in all their worldly business; and especially are men excited and animated by these, in all affairs wherein they are earnestly engaged, and which they pursue with vigor. We see the world of mankind to be exceeding busy and active; and the affections of men are the springs of the motion: take away all love and hatred, all hope and fear, all anger, zeal, and affectionate desire, and the world would be, in a great measure motionless and dead; there would be no such thing as activity amongst mankind, or any earnest pursuit whatsoever. It is affection that engages the covetous man, and him that is greedy of worldly profits, in his pursuits; and it is by the affections, that the ambitious man is put forward in his pursuit of worldly glory; and it is the affections also that actuate the voluptuous man, in his pursuit of pleasure and sensual delights: the world continues, from age to age, in a continual commotion and agitation, in a pursuit of these things; but take away all affection, and the spring of all this motion would be gone, and the motion itself would cease. And as in worldly things, worldly affections are very much the spring of men's motion and action; so in religious matters, the spring of their actions is very much religious affection: he that has doctrinal knowledge and speculation only, without affection, never is engaged in the business of religion.

3. Nothing is more manifest in fact, than that the things of religion take

hold of men's souls, no further than they affect them. There are multitudes that often hear the word of God, and therein hear of those things that are infinitely great and important, and that most nearly concern them, and all that is heard seems to be wholly ineffectual upon them, and to make no alteration in their disposition or behavior; and the reason is, they are not affected with what they hear. There are many that often hear of the glorious perfections of God, his almighty power and boundless wisdom, his infinite majesty, and that holiness of God, by which he is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity, and the heavens are not pure in his sight, and of God's infinite goodness and mercy, and hear of the great works of God's wisdom, power and goodness, wherein there appear the admirable manifestations of these perfections; they hear particularly of the unspeakable love of God and Christ, and of the great things that Christ has done and suffered, and of the great things of another world, of eternal misery in bearing the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God, and of endless blessedness and glory in the presence of God, and the enjoyment of his dear love; they also hear the peremptory commands of God, and his gracious counsels and warnings, and the sweet invitations of the gospel; I say, they often hear these things and yet remain as they were before, with no sensible alteration in them, either in heart or practice, because they are not affected with what they hear; and ever will be so till they are affected.—I am bold to assert, that there never was any considerable change wrought in the mind or conversation of any person, by any thing of a religious nature, that ever he read, heard or saw, that had not his affections moved. Never was a natural man engaged earnestly to seek his salvation; never were any such brought to cry after wisdom, and lift up their voice for understanding, and to wrestle with God in prayer for mercy; and never was one humbled, and brought to the foot of God, from any thing that ever he heard or imagined of his own unworthiness and deserving of God's displeasure; nor was ever one induced to fly for refuge unto Christ, while his heart remained unaffected. Nor was there ever a saint awakened out of a cold, lifeless frame, or recovered from a declining state in religion, and brought back from a lamentable departure from God, without having his heart affected. And in a word, there never was any thing considerable brought to pass in the heart or life of any man living, by the things of religion, that had not his heart deeply affected by those things.

4. The holy Scriptures do everywhere place religion very much in the affection; such as fear, hope, love, hatred, desire, joy, sorrow, gratitude, compassion, and zeal.

The Scriptures place much of religion in godly fear; insomuch, that it is often spoken of as the character of those that are truly religious persons, that they tremble at God's word, that they fear before him, that their flesh trembles for fear of him, and that they are afraid of his judgments, that his excellency makes them afraid, and his dread falls upon them, and the like: and a compellation commonly given the saints in Scripture, is "fearers of God," or, "they that fear the Lord." And because the fear of God is a great part of true godliness, hence true godliness in general, is very commonly called by the name of *the fear of God*; as every one knows, that knows any thing of the Bible.

So hope in God and in the promises of his word, is often spoken of in the Scripture, as a very considerable part of true religion. It is mentioned as one of the three great things of which religion consists, 1 Cor. xiii. 13. Hope in the Lord is also frequently mentioned as the character of the saints: Psal. cxlvi 5, "Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God." Jer. xvii. 7, "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and

whose hope the Lord is." Psal. xxxi. 24, "Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord." And the like in many other places. Religious fear and hope are, once and again, joined together, as jointly constituting the character of the true saints; Psal. xxxiii. 18, "Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy." Psal. cxlvii. 11, "The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy." Hope is so great a part of true religion, that the apostle says, "we are saved by hope," Rom. viii. 24. And this is spoken of as the helmet of the Christian soldier. 1 Thess. v. 8, "And for a helmet, the *hope* of salvation;" and the sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, which preserves it from being cast away by the storms of this evil world." Heb. vi. 19, "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the vail." It is spoken of as a great fruit and benefit which true saints receive by Christ's resurrection: 1 Pet. i. 3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

The Scriptures place religion very much in the affection of *love*, in love to God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and love to the people of God, and to mankind. The texts in which this is manifest, both in the Old Testament and New, are innumerable. But of this more afterwards.

The contrary affection of *hatred* also, as having sin for its object, is spoken of in Scripture as no inconsiderable part of true religion. It is spoken of as that by which true religion may be known and distinguished; Prov. viii. 13, "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil." And accordingly the saints are called upon to give evidence of their sincerity by this; Psal. xcvii. 10, "Ye that love the Lord hate evil." And the Psalmist often mentions it as an evidence of his sincerity; Psal. 2, 3, "I will walk within my house with a perfect heart. I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes; I hate the work of them that turn aside." Psal. cxix. 104, "I hate every false way." So ver. 127. Again, Psal. cxxxix. 21, "Do I not hate them, O Lord, that hate thee?"

So holy desire, exercised in longings, hungerings, and thirstings after God and holiness, is often mentioned in Scripture as an important part of true religion; Isa. xxvi. 8, "The desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee." Psal. xxvii. 4, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, and that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple." Psal. xlii. 1, 2, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God; my soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?" Psal. lxiii. 1, 2, "My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee, in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary." Psal. lxxxiv. 1, 2, "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God." Psal. cxix. 20, "My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times." So Psal. lxxiii. 25, and cxliii. 6, 7, and cxxx. 6. Cant. iii. 1, 2, and vi. 8. Such a holy desire and thirst of soul is mentioned, as one thing which renders or denotes a man truly blessed, in the beginning of Christ's sermon on the mount, Matt. v. 6: "Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled." And this holy thirst is spoken of, as a great thing in the condition of a participation of

the blessings of eternal life; Rev. xxi. 6, "I will give unto him that is athirst, of the fountain of the water of life freely."

The Scriptures speak of holy joy, as a great part of true religion. So it is represented in the text. And as an important part of religion, it is often exhorted to, and pressed, with great earnestness; Psal. xxxvii. 4, "Delight thyself in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart." Psal. xcvii 12, "Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous." So Psal. xxxiii. 1, "Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous." Matt. v. 12, "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad." Phil. iii. 1, "Finally, brethren, rejoice in the Lord." And chap. iv. 4, "Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again I say, Rejoice." 1 Thess. v. 16, "Rejoice evermore." Psal. cxlix. 2, "Let Israel rejoice in him that made him; let the children of Zion be joyful in their king." This is mentioned among the principal fruits of the Spirit of grace; Gal. v. 21, "The fruit of the Spirit is love," &c. The Psalmist mentions his holy joy, as an evidence of his sincerity. Psal. cxix. 14, "I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches."

Religious sorrow, mourning, and brokenness of heart, are also frequently spoken of as a great part of true religion. These things are often mentioned as distinguishing qualities of the true saints, and a great part of their character; Matt. v. 4, "Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted." Psal. xxxiv. 18, "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit." Isa. lxi. 1, 2, "The Lord hath anointed me, to bind up the broken-hearted, to comfort all that mourn." This godly sorrow and brokenness of heart is often spoken of, not only as a great thing in the distinguishing character of the saints, but that in them, which is peculiarly acceptable and pleasing to God; Psal. li. 17, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." Isa. lvii. 15, "Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place; with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Chap. lxvi. 2, "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit."

Another affection often mentioned, as that in the exercise of which much of true religion appears, is *gratitude;* especially as exercised in thankfulness and praise to God. This being so much spoken of in the book of Psalms, and other parts of the holy Scriptures, I need not mention particular texts.

Again, the holy Scriptures do frequently speak of compassion or mercy, as a very great and essential thing in true religion; insomuch that good men are in Scripture denominated from hence; and a merciful man and a good man are equivalent terms in Scripture; Isa. lvii. 1, "The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away." And the Scripture chooses out this quality, as that by which, in a peculiar manner, a righteous man is deciphered; Psal. xxxvii. 21, "The righteous showeth mercy, and giveth;" and ver. 26, "He is is ever merciful, and lendeth." And Prov. xiv. 21, "He that honoreth the Lord, hath mercy on the poor." And Col. iii. 12, "Put ye on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies," &c. This is one of those great things by which those who are truly blessed are described by our Saviour; Matt. v. 7, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." And this Christ also speaks of, as one of the weightier matters of the law; Matt. xxiii. 23, "Wo unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye pay tithe of mint, and anise, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith." To the like purpose is that, Mic. vi. 8, "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good: and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justice,

and love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God ?" And also that, Hos. vi. 6, "For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice." Which seems to have been a text much delighted in by our Saviour, by his manner of citing it once and again, Matt. ix. 13, and xii. 7.

Zeal is also spoken of, as a very essential part of the religion of true saints. It is spoken of as a great thing Christ had in view, in giving himself for our redemption; Tit. ii. 14, "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." And this is spoken of, as the great thing wanting in the lukewarm Laodiceans, Rev. iii. 15, 16, 19.

I have mentioned but a few texts, out of an innumerable multitude, all over the Scripture, which place religion very much in the affections. But what has been observed, may be sufficient to show that they who would deny that much of true religion lies in the affections, and maintain the contrary, must throw away what we have been wont to own for our Bible, and get some other rule, by which to judge of the nature of religion.

5. The Scriptures do represent true religion, as being summarily comprehended in love, the chief of the affections, and fountain of all other affections.

So our blessed Saviour represents the matter, in answer to the lawyer, who asked him, which was the great commandment of the law Matt. xxii. 37—40: "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." Which last words signify as much, as that these two commandments comprehend all the duty prescribed, and the religion taught in the law and the prophets. And the apostle Paul does from time to time make the same representation of the matter; as in Rom. xiii. 8, "He that loveth another, hath fulfilled the law." And ver. 10, "Love is the fulfilling of the law." And Gal. v. 14, "For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." So likewise in 1 Tim. i. 5, "Now the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart," &c. So the same apostle speaks of love, as the greatest thing in religion, and as the vitals, essence and soul of it; without which, the greatest knowledge and gifts, and the most glaring profession, and every thing else which appertains to religion, are vain and worthless; and represents it as the fountain from whence proceeds all that is good, in 1 Cor. xiii. throughout; for that which is there rendered *charity*, in the original is *αγαπη*, the proper English of which is *love*.

Now, although it be true, that the love thus spoken of includes the whole of a sincerely benevolent propensity of the soul towards God and man; yet it may be considered, that it is evident from what has been before observed, that this propensity or inclination of the soul, when in sensible and vigorous exercise, becomes affection, and is no other than affectionate love. And surely it is such vigorous and fervent love which Christ speaks of, as the sum of all religion, when he speaks of loving God with all our hearts, with all our souls, and with all our minds, and our neighbor as ourselves, as the sum of all that was taught and prescribed in the law and the prophets.

Indeed it cannot be supposed, when this affection of love is here, and in other Scriptures, spoken of as the sum of all religion, that hereby is meant the act, exclusive of the habit, or that the exercise of the understanding is excluded, which is implied in all reasonable affection. But it is doubtless true, and evident from these Scriptures, that the essence of all true religion lies in holy love;

and that in this divine affection, and an habitual disposition to it, and that light which is the foundation of it, and those things which are the fruits of it, consists the whole of religion.

From hence it clearly and certainly appears, that great part of true religion consists in the affections. For love is not only one of the affections, but it is the first and chief of the affections, and the fountain of all the affections. From love arises hatred of those things which are contrary to what we love, or which oppose and thwart us in those things that we delight in: and from the various exercises of love and hatred, according to the circumstances of the objects of these affections, as present or absent, certain or uncertain, probable or improbable, arise all those other affections of desire, hope, fear, joy, grief, gratitude, anger, &c. From a vigorous, affectionate, and fervent love to God, will necessarily arise other religious affections; hence will arise an intense hatred and abhorrence of sin, fear of sin, and a dread of God's displeasure, gratitude to God for his goodness, complacence and joy in God, when God is graciously and sensibly present, and grief when he is absent, and a joyful hope when a future enjoyment of God is expected, and fervent zeal for the glory of God And in like manner, from a fervent love to men, will arise all other virtuous affections towards men.

6. The religion of the most eminent saints we have an account of in the Scripture, consisted much in holy affections.

I shall take particular notice of three eminent saints, who have expressed the frame and sentiments of their own hearts, and so described their own religion, and the manner of their intercourse with God, in the writings which they have left us, that are a part of the sacred canon.

The first instance I shall take notice of, is David, that "man after God's own heart;" who has given us a lively portraiture of his religion in the book of Psalms. Those holy songs of his he has there left us, are nothing else but the expressions and breathings of devout and holy affections; such as an humble and fervent love to God, admiration of his glorious perfections and wonderful works, earnest desires, thirstings, and pantings of soul after God, delight and joy in God, a sweet and melting gratitude to God, for his great goodness, a holy exultation and triumph of soul in the favor, sufficiency, and faithfulness of God, his love to, and delight in the saints, the excellent of the earth, his great delight in the word and ordinances of God, his grief for his own and others' sins, and his fervent zeal for God, and against the enemies of God and his church. And these expressions of holy affection, which the psalms of David are everywhere full of, are the more to our present purpose, because those psalms are not only the expressions of the religion of so eminent a saint, that God speaks of as so agreeable to his mind; but were also, by the direction of the Holy Ghost, penned for the use of the church of God in its public worship, not only in that age, but in after ages; as being fitted to express the religion of all saints, in all ages, as well as the religion of the Psalmist. And it is moreover to be observed, that David, in the book of Psalms, speaks not as a private person, but as the Psalmist of Israel, as the subordinate head of the church of God, and leader in their worship and praises; and in many of the psalms speaks in the name of Christ, as personating him in these breathings forth of holy affection; and in many other psalms he speaks in the name of the church.

Another instance I shall observe, is the apostle Paul; who was in many respects, the chief of all the ministers of the New Testament; being above all others, a chosen vessel unto Christ, to bear his name before the Gentiles, and made a chief instrument of propagating and establishing the Christian church

in the world, and of distinctly revealing the glorious mysteries of the gospel, for the instruction of the church in all ages; and (as has not been improperly thought by some) the most eminent servant of Christ that ever lived, received to the highest rewards in the heavenly kingdom of his Master. By what is said of him in the Scripture, he appears to have been a person that was full of affection. And it is very manifest, that the religion he expresses in his epistles, consisted very much in holy affections. It appears by all his expressions of himself, that he was, in the course of his life, inflamed, actuated, and entirely swallowed up, by a most ardent love to his glorious Lord, esteeming all things as loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of him, and esteeming them but dung that he might win him. He represents himself, as overpowered by this holy affection, and as it were compelled by it to go forward in his service, through all difficulties and sufferings, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. And his epistles are full of expressions of an overpowering affection towards the people of Christ. He speaks of his dear love to them, 2 Cor. xii. 19, Phil. iv. 1, 2 Tim. i. 2; of his "abundant love," 2 Cor. ii. 4; and of his "affectionate and tender love," as of a nurse towards her children, 1 Thess. ii. 7, 8: "But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children; so, being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us." So also he speaks of his "bowels of love," Phil. i. 8, Philem. 5, 12, and 20. So he speaks of his "earnest care" for others, 2 Cor. viii. 16, and of his "bowels of pity, or mercy towards them, Phil. ii. 1; and of his concern for others, even to anguish of heart," 2 Cor. ii. 4: "For out of much affliction and anguish of heart, I wrote unto you with many tears; not that you should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you." He speaks of the great conflict of his soul for them, Col. ii. 1. He speaks of great and continual grief that he had in his heart from compassion to the Jews, Rom. ix. 2. He speaks of "his mouth's being opened, and his heart enlarged" towards Christians, 2 Cor. vi. 11: "O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged." He often speaks of his "affectionate and longing desires," 1 Thess. ii. 8, Rom. i. 11, Phil. i. 8, and chap. iv. 1, 2 Tim. i. 4. The same apostle is very often, in his epistles, expressing the affection of *joy*, 2 Cor. i. 12, and chap. vii. 7, and ver. 9. 16. Phil. i. 4, and chap. ii. 12, and chap. iii. 3. Col. i. 34. 1 Thess. iii. 9. He speaks of his "rejoicing with great joy," Phil. iv. 10, Philem. i. 7; of his "joying and rejoicing," Phil. ii. 1, 7, and "of his rejoicing exceedingly," 2 Cor. vii. 13, and of his being "filled with comfort, and being exceeding joyful," 2 Cor. vii. 4. He speaks of himself as "always rejoicing," 2 Cor. vi. 10. So he speaks of the triumphs of his soul, 2 Cor. ii. 14, and of "his glorying in tribulation," 2 Thess. i. 4, and Rom. v. 3. He also expresses the affection of *hope;* in Phil. i. 20, he speaks of his "earnest expectation, and his hope." He likewise expresses an affection of *godly jealousy*, 2 Cor. xi. 2, 3. And it appears by his whole history, after his conversion, in the Acts, and also by all his epistles, and the accounts he gives of himself there, that the affection of *zeal*, as having the cause of his Master, and the interest and prosperity of his church, for its object, was mighty in him, continually inflaming his heart, strongly engaging to those great and constant labors he went through, in instructing, exhorting, warning, and reproving others, "travailing in birth with them;" conflicting with those powerful and innumerable enemies who continually opposed him, wrestling with principalities and powers, not fighting as one who beats the air, running the race set before him, continuully pressing forwards through all manner of difficulties and sufferings; so that others

thought him quite beside himself. And how full he was of affection, does further appear by his being so full of tears: in 2 Cor. ii. 4, he speaks of his "many tears;" and so Acts xx. 19; and of his "tears that he shed continually night and day," ver. 31.

Now if any one can consider these accounts given in the Scripture of this great apostle, and which he gives of himself, and yet not see that his religion consisted much in affection, must have a strange faculty of managing his eyes, to shut out the light which shines most full in his face.

The other instance I shall mention, is of the apostle John, that beloved disciple, who was the nearest and dearest to his Master, of any of the twelve, and was by him admitted to the greatest privileges of any of them; being not only one of the three who were admitted to be present with him in the mount at his transfiguration, and at the raising of Jairus's daughter, and whom he took with him when he was in his agony, and one of the three spoken of by the apostle Paul, as the three main pillars of the Christian church; but was favored above all, in being admitted to lean on his Master's bosom at his last supper, and in being chosen by Christ, as the disciple to whom he would reveal his wonderful dispensations towards his church, to the end of time; as we have an account in the Book of Revelation; and to shut up the canon of the New Testament, and of the whole Scripture; being preserved much longer than all the rest of the apostles, to set all things in order in the Christian church, after their death.

It is evident by all his writings (as is gênerally observed by divines) that he was a person remarkably full of affection: his addresses to those whom he wrote to being inexpressibly tender and pathetical, breathing nothing but the most fervent love; as though he were all made up of sweet and holy affection. The proofs of which cannot be given without disadvantage, unless we should transcribe his whole writings.

7. He whom God sent into the world to be the light of the world, and head of the whole church, and the perfect example of true religion and virtue, for the imitation of all, the Shepherd whom the whole flock should follow wherever he goes, even the Lord Jesus Christ, was a person who was remarkably of a tender and affectionate heart; and his virtue was expressed very much in the exercise of holy affections. He was the greatest instance of ardency, vigor and strength of love, to both God and man, that ever was. It was these affections which got the victory, in that mighty struggle and conflict of his affections, in his agonies, when "he prayed more earnestly, and offered strong crying and tears," and wrestled in tears and in blood. Such was the power of the exercises of his holy love, that they were stronger than death, and in that great struggle, overcame those strong exercises of the natural affections of fear and grief, when he was sore amazed, and his soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. And he also appeared to be full of affection in the course of his life. We read of his great zeal, fulfilling that in the 69th Psalm, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up," John ii. 17. We read of his grief for the sins of men, Mark iii. 5: "He looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts;" and his breaking forth in tears and exclamations, from the consideration of the sin and misery of ungodly men, and on the sight of the city of Jerusalem, which was full of such inhabitants, Luke xix. 41, 42: "And, when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes." With chap. xiii. 34, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gath-

ered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!" We read of Christ's earnest desire, Luke xxii. 15: "With desire have I desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer." We often read of the affection of pity or compassion in Christ, Matt. xv. 32, and xviii. 34. Luke vii. 13, and of his "being moved with compassion," Matt. ix. 36, and xiv. 14, and Mark vi. 34. And how tender did his heart appear to be, on occasion of Mary's and Martha's mourning for their brother, and coming to him with their complaints and tears! Their tears soon drew tears from his eyes; he was affected with their grief, and wept with them; though he knew their sorrow should so soon be turned into joy, by their brother's being raised from the dead; see John xi. And how ineffably affectionate was that last and dying discourse, which Jesus had with his eleven disciples the evening before he was crucified; when he told them he was going away, and foretold them the great difficulties and sufferings they should meet with in the world, when he was gone; and comforted and counselled them as his dear little children; and bequeathed to them his Holy Spirit, and therein his peace, and his comfort and joy, as it were in his last will and testament, in the 13th, 14th, 15th, and 16th chapters of John; and concluded the whole with that affectionate intercessory prayer for them, and his whole church, in chap. xvii. Of all the discourses ever penned, or uttered by the mouth of any man, this seems to be the most affectionate and affecting.

8. The religion of heaven consists very much in affection.

There is doubtless true religion in heaven, and true religion in its utmost purity and perfection. But according to the Scripture representation of the heavenly state, the religion of heaven consists chiefly in holy and mighty love and joy, and the expression of these in most fervent and exalted praises. So that the religion of the saints in heaven, consists in the same things with that religion of the saints on earth, which is spoken of in our text, viz., love, and "joy unspeakable and full of glory." Now it would be very foolish to pretend, that because the saints in heaven be not united to flesh and blood, and have no animal fluids to be moved (through the laws of union of soul and body) with those great emotions of their souls, that therefore their exceeding love and joy are no affections. We are not speaking of the affections of the body, but of the affections of the soul, the chief of which are *love* and *joy*. When these are in the soul, whether that be in the body or out of it, the soul is affected and moved. And when they are in the soul, in that strength in which they are in the saints in heaven, the soul is mightily affected and moved, or, which is the same thing, has great affections. It is true, we do not experimentally know what love and joy are in a soul out of a body, or in a glorified body; i. e., we have not had experience of love and joy in a soul in these circumstances; but the saints on earth do know what divine love and joy in the soul are, and they know that love and joy are of the same kind with the love and joy which are in heaven, in separate souls there. The love and joy of the saints on earth, is the beginning and dawning of the light, life, and blessedness of heaven, and is like their love and joy there; or rather, the same in nature, though not the same with it, or like to it, in degree and circumstances. This is evident by many Scriptures, as Prov. iv. 18; John iv. 14, and chap. vi. 40, 47, 50, 51, 54, 58; 1 John iii. 15; 1 Cor. xiii. 8—12. It is unreasonable therefore to suppose, that the love and joy of the saints in heaven, not only differ in degree and circumstances, from the holy love and joy of the saints on earth, but is so entirely different in nature, that they are no affections; and merely because they have no blood and animal spirits to be set in motion by them, which motion or

the blood and animal spirits is not of the essence of these affections, in men on the earth, but the effect of them; although by their reaction they may make some circumstantial difference in the sensation of the mind. There is a sensation of the mind which loves and rejoices, that is antecedent to any effects on the fluids of the body; and this sensation of the mind, therefore, does not depend on these motions in the body, and so may be in the soul without the body. And wherever there are the exercises of love and joy, there is that sensation of the mind, whether it be in the body or out; and that inward sensation, or kind of spiritual sense, or feeling, and motion of the soul, is what is called affection: the soul when it thus feels (if I may say so), and is thus moved, is said to be affected, and especially when this inward sensation and motion are to a very high degree, as they are in the saints in heaven. If we can learn any thing of the state of heaven from the Scripture, the love and joy that the saints have there, is exceeding great and vigorous; impressing the heart with the strongest and most lively sensation of inexpressible sweetness, mightily moving, animating, and engaging them, making them like a flame of fire. And if such love and joy be not affections, then the word *affection* is of no use in language. Will any say, that the saints in heaven, in beholding the face of their Father, and the glory of their Redeemer, and contemplating his wonderful works, and particularly his laying down his life for them, have their hearts nothing moved and affected by all which they behold or consider?

Hence, therefore, the religion of heaven, consisting chiefly in holy love and joy, consists very much in affection; and therefore, undoubtedly, true religion consists very much in affection. The way to learn the true nature of any thing, is to go where that thing is to be found in its purity and perfection. If we would know the nature of true gold we must view it, not in the ore, but when it is refined. If we would learn what true religion is, we must go where there is true religion, and nothing but true religion, and in its highest perfection, without any defect or mixture. All who are truly religious are not of this world, they are strangers here, and belong to heaven; they are born from above, heaven is their native country, and the nature which they receive by this heavenly birth, is a heavenly nature, they receive an anointing from above; that principle of true religion which is in them, is a communication of the religion of heaven; their grace is the dawn of glory; and God fits them for that world by conforming them to it.

9. This appears from the nature and design of the ordinances and duties, which God hath appointed, as means and expressions of true religion.

To instance in the duty of prayer: it is manifest, we are not appointed in this duty, to declare God's perfections, his majesty, holiness, goodness, and all-sufficiency, and our own meanness, emptiness, dependence, and unworthiness, and our wants and desires, to inform God of these things, or to incline his heart, and prevail with him to be willing to show us mercy; but suitably to affect our own hearts with the things we express, and so to prepare us to receive the blessings we ask. And such gestures and manner of external behavior in the worship of God, which custom has made to be significations of humility and reverence, can be of no further use than as they have some tendency to affect our own hearts, or the hearts of others.

And the duty of singing praises to God seems to be appointed wholly to excite and express religious affections. No other reason can be assigned why we should express ourselves to God in verse, rather than in prose, and do it with music, but only, that such is our nature and frame, that these things have a tendency to move our affections.

The same thing appears in the nature and design of the sacraments, which God hath appointed. God, considering our frame, hath not only appointed that we should be told of the great things of the gospel, and of the redemption of Christ, and instructed in them by his word; but also that they should be, as it were, exhibited to our view, in sensible representations, in the sacraments, the more to affect us with them.

And the impressing divine things on the hearts and affections of men, is evidently one great and main end for which God has ordained that his word delivered in the holy Scriptures, should be opened, applied, and set home upon men, in preaching. And therefore it does not answer the aim which God had in this institution, merely for men to have good commentaries and expositions on the Scripture, and other good books of divinity; because, although these may tend as well as preaching to give men a good doctrinal or speculative understanding of the things of the word of God, yet they have not an equal tendency to impress them on men's hearts and affections. God hath appointed a particular and lively application of his word to men in the preaching of it, as a fit means to affect sinners with the importance of the things of religion, and their own misery, and necessity of a remedy, and the glory and sufficiency of a remedy provided; and to stir up the pure minds of the saints, and quicken their affections, by often bringing the great things of religion to their remembrance, and setting them before them in their proper colors, though they know them, and have been fully instructed in them already, 2 Pet. i. 12, 13. And particularly, to promote those two affections in them, which are spoken of in the text, love and joy: "Christ gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; that the body of Christ might be edified in love," Eph. iv. 11, 12, 16. The apostle in instructing and counselling Timothy concerning the work of the ministry, informs him that the great end of that word which a minister is to preach, is love or charity, 1 Tim. 3, 4, 5. And another affection which God has appointed preaching as a means to promote in the saints, is joy; and therefore ministers are called "helpers of their joy," 2 Cor. i. 24.

10. It is an evidence that true religion, or holiness of heart, lies very much in the affection of the heart, that the Scriptures place the sin of the heart very much in hardness of heart. Thus the Scriptures do everywhere. It was hardness of heart which excited grief and displeasure in Christ towards the Jews, Mark iii. 5: "He looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts." It is from men's having such a heart as this, that they treasure up wrath for themselves: Rom. ii. 5, "After thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." The reason given why the house of Israel would not obey God, was, that they were hard-hearted: Ezekiel iii. 7, "But the house of Israel will not hearken unto thee; for they will not hearken unto me: for all the house of Israel are impudent and hard-hearted." The wickedness of that perverse rebellious generation in the wilderness, is ascribed to the hardness of their hearts: Psal. xcv. 7—10, "To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness; when your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work: forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart," &c. This is spoken of as what prevented Zedekiah's turning to the Lord: 2 Chron. xxxvi. 13, "He stiffened his neck, and hardened his heart from turning to the Lord God of Israel." This principle is spoken of, as that from whence men are without the fear of God, and depart from God's

ways: Isa. lxiii. 17, "O Lord, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our heart from thy fear?" And men's rejecting Christ, and opposing Christianity, is laid to this principle: Acts xix. 9, "But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude." God's leaving men to the power of the sin and corruption of the heart, is often expressed by God's hardening their hearts: Rom. ix. 18, "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth." John xii. 40, "He hath blinded their minds, and hardened their hearts." And the apostle seems to speak of "an evil heart that departs from the living God, and a hard heart," as the same thing: Heb. iii. 8, "Harden not your heart, as in the provocation," &c.; ver. 12, 13, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God: but exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." And that great work of God in conversion, which consists in delivering a person from the power of sin, and mortifying corruption, is expressed, once and again, by God's "taking away the heart of stone, and giving a heart of flesh," Ezek. xi. 19, and chap. xxxvi. 26.

Now by a hard heart, is plainly meant an unaffected heart, or a heart not easy to be moved with virtuous affections, like a stone, insensible, stupid, unmoved, and hard to be impressed. Hence the hard heart is called a *stony heart*, and is opposed to a heart of flesh, that has feeling, and is sensibly touched and moved. We read in Scripture of a hard heart, and a tender heart; and doubtless we are to understand these, as contrary the one to the other. But what is a tender heart, but a heart which is easily impressed with what ought to affect it? God commends Josiah, because his heart was tender; and it is evident by those things which are mentioned as expressions and evidences of this tenderness of heart, that by his heart being tender is meant, his heart being easily moved with religious and pious affection: 2 Kings xxii. 19, "Because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the Lord, when thou heardest what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me, I also have heard thee, saith the Lord." And this is one thing, wherein it is necessary we should "become as little children, in order to our entering into the kingdom of God," even that we should have our hearts tender, and easily affected and moved in spiritual and divine things, as little children have in other things.

It is very plain in some places, in the texts themselves, that by hardness of heart is meant a heart void of affection. So, to signify the ostrich's being without natural affection to her young, it is said, Job xxxix. 16, "She hardeneth her heart against her young ones, as though they were not hers." So a person having a heart unaffected in time of danger, is expressed by his hardening his heart: Prov. xxviii. 14, "Happy is the man that feareth alway; but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief."

Now, therefore, since it is so plain, that by a hard heart, in Scripture, is meant a heart destitute of pious affections, and since also the Scriptures do so frequently place the sin and corruption of the heart in hardness of heart; it is evident, that the grace and holiness of the heart, on the contrary, must, in a great measure, consist in its having pious affections, and being easily susceptive of such affection. Divines are generally agreed, that sin radically and fundamentally consist in what is negative, or privative, having its root and foundation in a privation or want of holiness. And therefore undoubtedly, if it be so that sin does very much consist in hardness of heart, and so in the want of

pious affections of heart, holiness does consist very much in those pious affections.

I am far from supposing that all affections do show a tender heart: hatred, anger, vainglory, and other selfish and self-exalting affections, may greatly prevail in the hardest heart. But yet it is evident, that hardness of heart and tenderness of heart, are expressions that relate to the affection of the heart, and denote the heart's being susceptible of, or shut up against certain affections; of which I shall have occasion to speak more afterwards.

Upon the whole, I think it clearly and abundantly evident, that true religion lies very much in the affections. Not that I think these arguments prove, that religion in the hearts of the truly godly, is ever in exact proportion to the degree of affection, and present emotion of the mind: for undoubtedly, there is much affection in the true saints which is not spiritual; their religious affections are often mixed; all is not from grace, but much from nature. And though the affections have not their seat in the body; yet the constitution of the body may very much contribute to the present emotion of the mind. And the degree of religion is rather to be judged of by the fixedness and strength of the habit that is exercised in affection, whereby holy affection is habitual, than by the degree of the present exercise; and the strength of that habit is not always in proportion to outward effects and manifestations, or inward effects, in the hurry and vehemence, and sudden changes of the course of the thoughts of the mind. But yet it is evident, that religion consists so much in affection, as that without holy affection there is no true religion; and no light in the understanding is good, which does not produce holy affection in the heart: no habit or principle in the heart is good, which has no such exercise; and no external fruit is good, which does not proceed from such exercises.

Having thus considered the evidence of the proposition laid down, I proceed to some inferences.

1. We may hence learn how great their error is, who are for discarding all religious affections, as having nothing solid or substantial in them.

There seems to be too much of a disposition this way, prevailing in this land at this time. Because many who, in the late extraordinary season, appeared to have great religious affections, did not manifest a right temper of mind, and run into many errors, in the time of their affections, and the heat of their zeal; and because the high affections of many seem to be so soon come to nothing, and some who seemed to be mightily raised and swallowed up with joy and zeal, for a while, seem to have returned like the dog to his vomit; hence religious affections in general are grown out of credit with great numbers, as though true religion did not at all consist in them. Thus we easily and naturally run from one extreme to another. A little while ago we were in the other extreme; there was a prevalent disposition to look upon all high religious affections as eminent exercises of true grace, without much inquiring into the nature and source of those affections, and the manner in which they arose: if persons did but appear to be indeed very much moved and raised, so as to be full of religious talk, and express themselves with great warmth and earnestness, and to be filled, or to be very full, as the phrases were; it was too much the manner, without further examination, to conclude such persons were full of the Spirit of God, and had eminent experience of his gracious influences. This was the extreme which was prevailing three or four years ago. But of late, instead of esteeming and admiring all religious affections without distinction, it is a thing much more prevalent, to reject and discard all without distinction. Herein appears the subtilty of Satan. While he saw that affections were much in vogue,

knowing the greater part of the land were not versed in such things, and had not had much experience of great religious affections to enable them to judge well of them, and distinguish between true and false; then he knew he could best play his game, by sowing tares amongst the wheat, and mingling false affections with the works of God's Spirit: he knew this to be a likely way to delude and eternally ruin many souls, and greatly to wound religion in the saints, and entangle them in a dreadful wilderness, and by and by, to bring all religion into disrepute.

But now, when the ill consequences of these false affections appear, and it is become very apparent, that some of those emotions which made a glaring show, and were by many greatly admired, were in reality nothing; the devil sees it to be for his interest to go another way to work, and to endeavor to his utmost to propagate and establish a persuasion, that all affections and sensible emotions of the mind, in things of religion, are nothing at all to be regarded, but are rather to be avoided, and carefully guarded against, as things of a pernicious tendency. This he knows is the way to bring all religion to a mere lifeless formality, and effectually shut out the power of godliness, and every thing which is spiritual, and to have all true Christianity turned out of doors. For although to true religion there must indeed be something else besides affection; yet true religion conists so much in the affections, that there can be no true religion without them. He who has no religious affection, is in a state of spiritual death, and is wholly destitute of the powerful, quickening, saving influences of the Spirit of God upon his heart. As there is no true religion where there is nothing else but affection, so there is no true religion where there is no religious affection. As on the one hand, there must be light in the understanding, as well as an affected fervent heart; where there is heat without light, there can be nothing divine or heavenly in that heart; so on the other hand, where there is a kind of light without heat, a head stored with notions and speculations, with a cold and unaffected heart, there can be nothing divine in that light, that knowledge is no true spiritual knowledge of divine things. If the great things of religion are rightly understood, they will affect the heart. The reason why men are not affected by such infinitely great, important, glorious, and wonderful things, as they often hear and read of, in the word of God, is undoubtedly because they are blind; if they were not so, it would be impossible, and utterly inconsistent with human nature, that their hearts should be otherwise than strongly impressed, and greatly moved by such things.

This manner of slighting all religious affections, is the way exceedingly to harden the hearts of men, and to encourage them in their stupidity and senselessness, and to keep them in a state of spiritual death as long as they live, and bring them at last to death eternal. The prevailing prejudice against religious affections at this day, in the land, is apparently of awful effect to harden the hearts of sinners, and damp the graces of many of the saints, and stun the life and power of religion, and preclude the effect of ordinances, and hold us down in a state of dulness and apathy, and undoubtedly causes many persons greatly to offend God, in entertaining mean and low thoughts of the extraordinary work he has lately wrought in this land.

And for persons to despise and cry down all religious affections, is the way to shut all religion out of their own hearts, and to make thorough work in ruining their souls.

They who condemn high affections in others, are certainly not likely to have high affections themselves. And let it be considered, that they who have but little religious affection, have certainly but little religion. And they who con-

demn others for their religious affections, and have none themselves, have no religion.

There are false affections, and there are true. A man's having much affection, does not prove that he has any true religion: but if he has no affection, it proves that he has no true religion. The right way, is not to reject all affections, nor to approve all; but to distinguish between affections, approving some, and rejecting others; separating between the wheat and the chaff, the gold and the dross, the precious and the vile.

2. If it be so, that true religion lies much in the affections, hence we may infer, that such means are to be desired, as have much of a tendency to move the affections. Such books, and such a way of preaching the word, and administration of ordinances, and such a way of worshipping God in prayer, and singing praises, is much to be desired, as has a tendency deeply to affect the hearts of those who attend these means.

Such a kind of means would formerly have been highly approved of, and applauded by the generality of the people of the land, as the most excellent and profitable, and having the greatest tendency to promote the ends of the means of grace. But the prevailing taste seems of late strangely to be altered: that pathetical manner of praying and preaching, which would formerly have been admired and extolled, and that for this reason, because it had such a tendency to move the affections, now, in great multitudes, immediately excites disgust, and moves no other affections, that those of displeasure and contempt.

Perhaps, formerly the generality (at least of the common people) were in the extreme, of looking too much to an affectionate address, in public performances: but now, a very great part of the people seem to have gone far into a contrary extreme. Indeed there may be such means, as may have a great tendency to stir up the passions of weak and ignorant persons, and yet have no great tendency to benefit their souls: for though they may have a tendency to excite affections, they may have little or none to excite gracious affections, or any affections tending to grace. But undoubtedly, if the things of religion, in the means used, are treated according to their nature, and exhibited truly, so as tends to convey just apprehensions, and a right judgment of them; the more they have a tendency to move the affections the better.

3. If true religion lies much in the affections, hence we may learn, what great cause we have to be ashamed and confounded before God, that we are no more affected with the great things of religion. It appears from what has been said, that this arises from our having so little true religion.

God has given to mankind affections, for the same purpose which he has given all the faculties and principles of the human soul for, viz., that they might be subservient to man's chief end, and the great business for which God has created him, that is, the business of religion. And yet how common is it among mankind, that their affections are much more exercised and engaged in other matters, than in religion! In things which concern men's worldly interest, their outward delights, their honor and reputation, and their natural relations, they have their desires eager, their appetites vehement, their love warm and affectionate, their zeal ardent; in these things their hearts are tender and sensible, easily moved, deeply impressed, much concerned, very sensibly affected, and greatly engaged; much depressed with grief at worldly losses, and highly raised with joy at worldly successes and prosperity. But how insensible and unmoved are most men, about the great things of another world! How dull are their affections! How heavy and hard their hearts in these matters! Here their love is cold, their desires languid, their zeal low, and their gratitude small.

How they can sit and hear of the infinite height, and depth, and length, and breadth of the love of God in Christ Jesus, of his giving his infinitely dear Son, to be offered up a sacrifice for the sins of men, and of the unparalleled love of the innocent, and holy, and tender Lamb of God, manifested in his dying agonies, his bloody sweat, his loud and bitter cries, and bleeding heart, and all this for enemies, to redeem them from deserved, eternal burnings, and to bring to unspeakable and everlasting joy and glory; and yet be cold, and heavy, insensible, and regardless! Where are the exercises of our affections proper, if not here? What is it that does more require them? And what can be a fit occasion of their lively and vigorous exercise, if not such a one as this? Can any thing be set in our view, greater and more important? Any thing more wonderful and surprising? Or more nearly concerning our interest? Can we suppose the wise Creator implanted such principles in the human nature as the affections, to be of use to us, and to be exercised on certain proper occasions, but to lie still on such an occasion as this? Can any Christian who believes the truth of these things, entertain such thoughts?

If we ought ever to exercise our affections at all, and if the Creator has not unwisely constituted the human nature in making these principles a part of it, when they are vain and useless; then they ought to be exercised about those objects which are most worthy of them. But is there any thing which Christians can find in heaven or earth, so worthy to be the objects of their admiration and love, their earnest and longing desires, their hope, and their rejoicing, and their fervent zeal, as those things that are held forth to us in the gospel of Jesus Christ? In which not only are things declared most worthy to affect us, but they are exhibited in the most affecting manner. The glory and beauty of the blessed Jehovah, which is most worthy in itself, to be the object of our admiration and love, is there exhibited in the most affecting manner that can be conceived of, as it appears, shining in all its lustre, in the face of an incarnate, infinitely loving, meek, compassionate, dying Redeemer. All the virtues of the Lamb of God, his humility, patience, meekness, submission, obedience, love and compassion, are exhibited to our view, in a manner the most tending to move our affections, of any that can be imagined; as they all had their greatest trial, and their highest exercise, and so their brightest manifestation, when he was in the most affecting circumstances; even when he was under his last sufferings, those unutterable and unparalleled sufferings he endured, from his tender love and pity to us. There also the hateful nature of our sins is manifested in the most affecting manner possible: as we see the dreadful effects of them, in what our Redeemer, who undertook to answer for us, suffered for them. And there we have the most affecting manifestation of God's hatred of sin, and his wrath and justice in punishing it; as we see his justice in the strictness and inflexibleness of it; and his wrath in its terribleness, in so dreadfully punishing our sins, in one who was infinitely dear to him, and loving to us. So has God disposed things, in the affair of our redemption, and in his glorious dispensations, revealed to us in the gospel, as though every thing were purposely contrived in such a manner, as to have the greatest possible tendency to reach our hearts in the most tender part, and move our affections most sensibly and strongly. How great cause have we therefore to be humbled to the dust, that we are no more affected!

PART II.

SHOWING WHAT ARE NO CERTAIN SIGNS THAT RELIGIOUS AFFECTIONS ARE TRULY GRACIOUS, OR THAT THEY ARE NOT.

If any one, on the reading of what has been just now said, is ready to acquit himself, and say, "I am not one of those who have no religious affections; I am often greatly moved with the consideration of the great things of religion:" let him not content himself with this, that he has religious affections: for as we observed before, as we ought not to reject and condemn all affections, as though true religion did not at all consist in affection; so on the other hand, we ought not to approve of all, as though every one that was religiously affected had true grace, and was therein the subject of the saving influences of the Spirit of God; and that therefore the right way is to distinguish among religious affections, between one sort and another. Therefore let us now endeavor to do this; and in order to do it, I would do two things.

I. I would mention some things, which are no signs one way or the other, either that affections are such as true religion consists in, or that they are otherwise; that we may be guarded against judging of affections by false signs.

II. I would observe some things, wherein those affections which are spiritual and gracious, differ from those which are not so, and may be distinguished and known.

First, I would take notice of some things, which are no signs that affections are gracious, or that they are not.

I. It is no sign one way or the other, that religious affections are very great, or raised very high.

Some are ready to condemn all high affections: if persons appear to have their religious affections raised to an extraordinary pitch, they are prejudiced against them, and determine that they are delusions, without further inquiry. But if it be, as has been proved, that true religion lies very much in religious affections, then it follows, that if there be a great deal of true religion, there will be great religious affections; if true religion in the hearts of men be raised to a great height, divine and holy affections will be raised to a great height.

Love is an affection, but will any Christian say, men ought not to love God and Jesus Christ in a high degree? And will any say, we ought not to have a very great hatred of sin, and a very deep sorrow for it? Or that we ought not to exercise a high degree of gratitude to God for the mercies we receive of him, and the great things he has done for the salvation of fallen men? Or that we should not have very great and strong desires after God and holiness? Is there any who will profess, that his affections in religion are great enough; and will say, "I have no cause to be humbled, that I am no more affected with the things of religion than I am; I have no reason to be ashamed, that I have no greater exercises of love to God and sorrow for sin, and gratitude for the mercies which I have received?" Who is there that will bless God that he is affected enough with what he has read and heard of the wonderful love of God to worms and rebels, in giving his only begotten Son to die for them, and of the dying love of Christ; and will pray that he may not be affected with them in any higher degree, because high affections are improper, and very unlovely in Christians, being enthusiastical, and ruinous to true religion?

Our text plainly speaks of great and high affections when it speaks of "rejoicing with joy unspeakable, and full of glory:" here the most superlative expressions are used, which language will afford. And the Scriptures often require us to exercise very high affections: thus in the first and great commandment of the law, there is an accumulation of expressions, as though words were wanting to express the degree in which we ought to love God: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." So the saints are called upon to exercise high degrees of joy: "Rejoice," says Christ to his disciples, "and be exceeding glad," Matt. v. 12. So it is said, Psalm lxviii. 3, "Let the righteous be glad: let them rejoice before God; yea, let them exceedingly rejoice." So in the same book of Psalms, the saints are often called upon to shout for joy; and in Luke vi. 23, to leap for joy. So they are abundantly called upon to exercise high degrees of gratitude for mercies, to "praise God with all their hearts, with hearts lifted up in the ways of the Lord, and their souls magnifying the Lord, singing his praises, talking of his wondrous works, declaring his doings, &c."

And we find the most eminent saints in Scripture often professing high affections. Thus the Psalmist speaks of his love, as if it were unspeakable; Psal. cxix. 97, "O how love I thy law!" So he expresses a great degree of hatred of sin, Psal. cxxxix. 21, 22: "Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? And am not I grieved with them that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred." He also expresses a high degree of sorrow for sin: he speaks of his sins "going over his head as a heavy burden that was too heavy for him: and of his roaring all the day, and his moisture being turned into the drought of summer," and his bones being as it were broken with sorrow. So he often expresses great degrees of spiritual desires, in a multitude of the strongest expressions which can be conceived of; such as "his longing, his soul's thirsting as a dry and thirsty land, where no water is, his panting, his flesh and heart crying out, his soul's breaking for the longing it hath," &c. He expresses the exercises of great and extreme grief for the sins of others, Psal. cxix. 136, "Rivers of water run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law." And verse 53, "Horror hath taken hold upon me, because of the wicked that forsake thy law." He expresses high exercises of joy, Psal. xxi. 1: "The king shall joy in thy strength, and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice." Psal. lxxi. 23, "My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee." Psal. lxiii. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, "Because thy loving kindness is better than life; my lips shall praise thee. Thus will I bless thee, while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips; when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches. Because thou hast been my help; therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice."

The Apostle Paul expresses high exercises of affection. Thus he expresses the exercises of pity and concern for others' good, even to anguish of heart; a great, fervent, and abundant love, and earnest and longing desires, and exceeding joy; and speaks of the exultation and triumphs of his soul, and his earnest expectation and hope, and his abundant tears, and the travails of his soul, in pity, grief, earnest desires, godly jealousy, and fervent zeal, in many places that have been cited already, and which therefore I need not repeat. John the Baptist expressed great joy, John iii. 39. Those blessed women that anointed the body of Jesus, are represented as in a very high exercise of religious affection, on occasion of Christ's resurrection, Matt. xxviii. 8: "And they departed from the sepulchre with fear and great joy."

It is often foretold of the church of God, in her future happy seasons here on earth, that they shall exceedingly rejoice: Psal. lxxxix. 15, 16, "They shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance. In thy name shall they rejoice all the day: and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted." Zech. ix. 9, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh," &c. The same is represented in innumerable other places. And because high degrees of joy are the proper and genuine fruits of the gospel of Christ, therefore the angel calls this gospel, "good tidings of great joy, that should be to all people."

The saints and angels in heaven, that have religion in its highest perfection, are exceedingly affected with what they behold and contemplate of God's perfections and works. They are all as a pure heavenly flame of fire in their love, and in the greatness and strength of their joy and gratitude: their praises are represented, "as the voice of many waters and as the voice of a great thunder." Now the only reason why their affections are so much higher than the holy affections of saints on earth, is, they see the things they are affected by, more according to their truth, and have their affections more conformed to the nature of things. And therefore, if religious affections in men here below, are but of the same nature and kind with theirs, the higher they are, and the nearer they are to theirs in degree, the better, because therein they will be so much the more conformed to truth, as theirs are.

From these things it certainly appears, that religious affections being in a very high degree, is no evidence that they are not such as have the nature of true religion. Therefore they do greatly err, who condemn persons as enthusiasts, merely because their affections are very high.

And on the other hand, it is no evidence that religious affections are of a spiritual and gracious nature, because they are great. It is very manifest by the holy Scripture, our sure and infallible rule to judge of things of this nature, that there are religious affections which are very high, that are not spiritual and saving. The Apostle Paul speaks of affections in the Galatians, which had been exceedingly elevated, and which yet he manifestly speaks of, as fearing that they were vain, and had come to nothing: Gal. iv. 15, "Where is the blessedness you spoke of? For I bear you record, that if it had been possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me." And in the 11th verse, he tells them, "he was afraid of them, lest he had bestowed upon them labor in vain." So the children of Israel were greatly affected with God's mercy to them, when they had seen how wonderfully he wrought for them at the Red Sea, where they sang God's praise; though they soon forgat his works. So they were greatly affected again at mount Sinai, when they saw the marvellous manifestations God made of himself there; and seemed mightily engaged in their minds, and with great forwardness made answer, when God proposed his holy covenant to them, saying, "All that the Lord hath spoken will we do, and be obedient." But how soon was there an end to all this mighty forwardness and engagedness of affection! How quickly were they turned aside after other gods, rejoicing and shouting around their golden calf! So great multitudes who were affected with the miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead, were elevated to a high degree, and made a mighty ado, when Jesus presently after entered into Jerusalem, exceedingly magnifying Christ, as though the ground were not good enough for the ass he rode to tread upon; and therefore cut branches of palm trees, and strewed them in the way; yea, pulled off their garments, and spread them in the way; and cried with loud voices, "Hosanna to the Son of David, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord,

hosanna in the highest;" so as to make the whole city ring again, and put all into an uproar. We learn by the evangelist John, that the reason why the people made this ado, was because they were affected with the miracle of raising Lazarus, John xii. 18. Here was a vast multitude crying Hosanna on this occasion, so that it gave occasion to the Pharisees to say, "Behold, the world has gone after him," John xii. 19, but Christ had at that time but few true disciples. And how quickly was this ado at an end! All of this nature is quelled and dead, when this Jesus stands bound, with a mock robe and a crown of thorns, to be derided, spit upon, scourged, condemned and executed. Indeed, there was a great and loud outcry concerning him among the multitude then, as well as before; but of a very different kind: it is not then, Hosanna, hosanna, but Crucify, crucify.

And it is the concurring voice of all orthodox divines, that there may be religious affections, which are raised to a very high degree, and yet there be nothing of true religion.*

II. It is no sign that affections have the nature of true religion, or that they have not, that they have great effects on the body.

All affections whatsoever, have in some respect or degree, an effect on the body. As was observed before, such is our nature, and such are the laws of union of soul and body, that the mind can have no lively or vigorous exercise, without some effect upon the body. So subject is the body to the mind, and so much do its fluids, especially the animal spirits, attend the motions and exercises of the mind, that there cannot be so much as an intense thought, without an effect upon them. Yea, it is questionable whether an imbodied soul ever so much as thinks one thought, or has any exercise at all, but that there is some corresponding motion or alteration of motion, in some degree, of the fluids, in some part of the body. But universal experience shows, that the exercise of the affections have in a special manner a tendency to some sensible effect upon the body. And if this be so, that all affections have some effect upon the body, we may then well suppose, the greater those affections be, and the more vigorous their exercise (other circumstances being equal) the greater will be the effect on the body. Hence it is not to be wondered at, that very great and strong exercises of the affections should have great effects on the body. And therefore, seeing there are very great affections, both common and spiritual; hence it is not to be wondered at, that great effects on the body should arise from both these kinds of affections. And consequently these effects are no signs, that the affections they arise from, are of one kind or the other.

Great effects on the body certainly are no sure evidences that affections are spiritual; for we see that such effects oftentimes arise from great affections about temporal things, and when religion is no way concerned in them. And if great affections about secular things, that are purely natural, may have these effects, I know not by what rule we should determine that high affections about religious things, which arise in like manner from nature, cannot have the like effect.

Nor, on the other hand, do I know of any rule any have to determine, that gracious and holy affections, when raised as high as any natural affections, and have equally strong and vigorous exercises, cannot have a great effect on the body. No such rule can be drawn from reason: I know of no reason, why a being affected with a view of God's glory should not cause the body to faint, as well as being affected with a view of Solomon's glory. And no such rule has

* Mr. Stoddard observes, "That common affections are sometimes stronger than saving."—GUIDE TO CHRIST, p. 2.

as yet been produced from the Scripture; none has ever been found in all the late controversies which have been about things of this nature. There is a great power in spiritual affections: we read of the power which worketh in Christians,* and of the Spirit of God being in them as the Spirit of power,† and of the effectual working of his power in them.‡ But man's nature is weak: flesh and blood are represented in Scripture as exceeding weak; and particularly with respect to its unfitness for great spiritual and heavenly operations and exercises, Matt. xxvi. 41, 1 Cor. xv. 43, and 50. The text we are upon speaks of "joy unspeakable, and full of glory." And who that considers what man's nature is, and what the nature of the affections is, can reasonably doubt but that such unutterable and glorious joys, may be too great and mighty for weak dust and ashes, so as to be considerably overbearing to it? It is evident by the Scripture, that true divine discoveries, or ideas of God's glory, when given in a great degree, have a tendency, by affecting the mind, to overbear the body; because the Scripture teaches us often, that if these ideas or views should be given to such a degree, as they are given in heaven, the weak frame of the body could not subsist under it, and that no man can, in that manner, see God and live. The knowledge which the saints have of God's beauty and glory in this world, and those holy affections that arise from it, are of the same nature and kind with what the saints are the subjects of in heaven, differing only in degree and circumstances: what God gives them here, is a foretaste of heavenly happiness, and an earnest of their future inheritance. And who shall limit God in his giving this earnest, or say he shall give so much of the inheritance, such a part of the future reward, as an earnest of the whole, and no more? And seeing God has taught us in his word, that the whole reward is such, that it would at once destroy the body, is it not too bold a thing for us, so to set bounds to the sovereign God, as to say, that in giving the earnest of this reward in this world, he shall never give so much of it, as in the least to diminish the strength of the body, when God has nowhere thus limited himself?

The Psalmist, speaking of the vehement religious affections he had, speaks of an effect in his flesh or body, besides what was in his soul, expressly distinguishing one from the other, once and again: Psal. lxxxiv. 2, "My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God." Here is a plain distinction between the heart and the flesh, as being each affected. So Psal. lxiii. 1, "My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee, in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is." Here also is an evident designed distinction between the soul and the flesh.

The prophet Habakkuk speaks of his body's being overborne by a sense of the majesty of God, Hab. iii. 16: "When I heard, my belly trembled: my lips quivered at the voice: rottenness enter into my bones, and I trembled in myself." So the Psalmist speaks expressly of his flesh trembling, Psal. cxix. 120: "My flesh trembleth for fear of thee."

That such ideas of God's glory as are sometimes given in this world, have a tendency to overbear the body, is evident, because the Scripture gives us an account, that this has sometimes actually been the effect of those external manifestations God has made of himself to some of the saints which were made to that end, viz., to give them an idea of God's majesty and glory. Such instances we have in the prophet Daniel, and the apostle John. Daniel, giving an account of an external representation of the glory of Christ, says, Dan. x. 8, "And there remained no strength in me; for my comeliness was turned into corrup-

* Eph. iii. 7. † 2 Tim. i. 7. ‡ Eph. iii. 7, 20. || Eph. i. 19.

tion, and I retained no strength." And the apostle John, giving an account of a like manifestation made to him, says, Rev. i. 17, "And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead." It is in vain to say here, these were only external manifestations or symbols of the glory of Christ, which these saints beheld: for though it be true, that they were outward representations of Christ's glory, which they beheld with their bodily eyes; yet the end and use of these external symbols or representations was to give to these prophets an idea of the thing represented, and that was the true divine glory and majesty of Christ, which is his spiritual glory; they were made use of only as significations of this spiritual glory, and thus undoubtedly they received them, and improved them, and were affected by them. According to the end for which God intended these outward signs, they received by them a great and lively apprehension of the real glory and majesty of God's nature, which they were signs of; and thus were greatly affected, their souls swallowed up, and their bodies overborne. And I think they are very bold and daring, who will say God cannot, or shall not give the like clear and affecting ideas and apprehensions of the same real glory and majesty of his nature, to any of his saints, without the intervention of any such external shadows of it.

Before I leave this head, I would farther observe, that it is plain the Scripture often makes use of bodily effects, to express the strength of holy and spiritual affections; such as trembling,* groaning,† being sick,‡ crying out,‖ panting,§ and fainting.¶ Now if it be supposed, that these are only figurative expressions, to represent the degree of affection: yet I hope all will allow, that they are fit and suitable figures to represent the high degree of those spiritual affections, which the Spirit of God makes use of them to represent; which I do not see how they would be, if those spiritual affections, let them be in never so high a degree, have no tendency to any such things; but that on the contrary, they are the proper effects and sad tokens of false affections, and the delusion of the devil. I cannot think, God would commonly make use of things which are very alien from spiritual affections, and are shrewd marks of the hand of Satan, and smell strong of the bottomless pit, as beautiful figures, to represent the high degree of holy and heavenly affections.

III. It is no sign that affections are truly gracious affections, or that they are not, that they cause those who have them to be fluent, fervent, and abundant, in talking of the things of religion.

There are many persons, who, if they see this in others, are greatly prejudiced against them. Their being so full of talk, is with them a sufficient ground to condemn them, as Pharisees, and ostentatious hypocrites. On the other hand, there are many, who if they see this effect in any, are very ignorantly and imprudently forward, at once to determine that they are the true children of God, and are under the saving influences of his Spirit, and speak of it as a great evidence of a new creature; they say, "such a one's mouth is now opened: he used to be slow to speak; but now he is full and free; he is free now to open his heart, and tell his experiences, and declare the praises of God; it comes from him, as free as water from a fountain;" and the like. And especially are they captivated into a confident and undoubting persuasion, that they are savingly wrought upon, if they are not only free and abundant, but very affectionate and earnest in their talk.

But this is the fruit of but little judgment, a scanty and short experience; as events do abundantly show: and is a mistake persons often run into, through

* Psal. cxix. 120. Ezra ix. 4. Isa. lxvi. 2, 5. Hab. iii. 16. † Rom. viii. 26. ‡ Cant. ii. 5, and v. 8. ‖ Psal. lxxxiv. 2. § Psal. xxxviii. 10, and xlii. 1, and cxix. 131. ¶ Psal. lxxxiv. 2, and cxix. 81.

their trusting to their own wisdom and discerning, and making their own rotions their rule, instead of the holy Scripture. Though the Scripture be full of rules, both how we should judge of our own state, and also how we should be conducted in our opinion of others; yet we have nowhere any rule, by which to judge ourselves or others to be in a good estate, from any such effect: for this is but the religion of the mouth and of the tongue, and what is in the Scripture represented by the leaves of a tree, which, though the tree ought not to be without them, yet are nowhere given as an evidence of the goodness of the tree.

That persons are disposed to be abundant in talking of things of religion, may be from a good cause, and it may be from a bad one. It may be because their hearts are very full of holy affections; "for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh:" and it may be because persons' hearts are very full of religious affection which is not holy; for still out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. It is very much the nature of the affections, of whatever kind they be, and whatever objects they are exercised about, if they are strong, to dispose persons to be very much in speaking of that which they are affected with: and not only to speak much, but to speak very earnestly and fervently. And therefore persons talking abundantly and very fervently about the things of religion, can be an evidence of no more than this, that they are very much affected with the things of religion; but this may be (as has been already shown) and there be no grace. That which men are greatly affected with, while the high affection lasts, they will be earnestly engaged about, and will be likely to show that earnestness in their talk and behavior; as the greater part of the Jews, in all Judah and Galilee, did for a while, about John the Baptist's preaching and baptism, when they were willing for a season to rejoice in his light; a mighty ado was made, all over the land, and among all sorts of persons, about this great prophet and his ministry. And so the multitude, in like manner, often manifested a great earnestness, a mighty engagedness of spirit, in every thing that was external, about Christ and his preaching and miracles, "being astonished at his doctrine, anon with joy receiving the word," following him sometimes night and day, leaving meat, drink, and sleep to hear him: once following him into the wilderness, fasting three days going to hear him; sometimes crying him up to the clouds, saying, "Never man spake like this man!" being fervent and earnest in what they said. But what did these things come to, in the greater part of them?

A person may be over full of talk of his own experiences; commonly falling upon it, everywhere, and in all companies; and when it is so, it is rather a dark sign than a good one. As a tree that is over full of leaves seldom bears much fruit; and as a cloud, though to appearance very pregnant and full of water, if it brings with it overmuch wind, seldom affords much rain to the dry and thirsty earth; which very thing the Holy Spirit is pleased several times to make use of, to represent a great show of religion with the mouth, without answerable fruit in the life: Prov. xxv. 24, "Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift, is like clouds and wind without rain." And the apostle Jude, speaking of some in the primitive times, that crept in unawares among the saints, and having a great show of religion, were for a while not suspected, "These are clouds (says he) without water, carried about of winds," Jude ver. 4 and 12. And the apostle Peter, speaking of the same, says, 2 Pet. ii. 17, "These are clouds without water, carried with a tempest."

False affections, if they are equally strong, are much more forward to de-

clare themselves, than true: because it is the nature of false religion, to affect show and observation; as it was with the Pharisees.*

IV. It is no sign that affections are gracious, or that they are otherwise, that persons did not make them themselves, or excite them of their own contrivance, and by their own strength.

There are many in these days, that condemn all affections which are excited in a way that the subjects of them can give no account of, as not seeming to be the fruit of any of their own endeavors, or the natural consequence of the faculties and principles of human nature, in such circumstances, and under such means; but to be from the influence of some extrinsic and supernatural power upon their minds. How greatly has the doctrine of the inward experience, or sensible perceiving of the immediate power and operation of the Spirit of God, been reproached and ridiculed by many of late! They say, the manner of the Spirit of God is to co-operate in a silent, secret, and undiscernible way with the use of means, and our own endeavors; so that there is no distinguishing by sense, between the influences of the Spirit of God, and the natural operations of the faculties of our own minds.

And it is true, that for any to expect to receive the saving influences of the Spirit of God, while they neglect a diligent improvement of the appointed means of grace, is unreasonable presumption. And to expect that the Spirit of God will savingly operate upon their minds, without the Spirit's making use of means, as subservient to the effect, is enthusiastical. It is also undoubtedly true, that the Spirit of God is very various in the manner and circumstances of his operations, and that sometimes he operates in a way more secret and gradual, and from smaller beginnings, than at others.

But if there be indeed a power, entirely different from, and beyond our power, or the power of all means and instruments, and above the power of nature, which is requisite in order to the production of saving grace in the heart, according to the general profession of the country; then, certainly it is in no wise unreasonable to suppose, that this effect should very frequently be produced after such a manner, as to make it very manifest, apparent, and sensible that it is so. If grace be indeed owing to the powerful and efficacious operation of an extrinsic agent, or divine efficient out of ourselves, why is it unreasonable to suppose it should seem to be so to them who are the subjects of it? Is it a strange thing, that it should seem to be as it is? When grace in the heart indeed is not produced by our strength, nor is the effect of the natural power of our own faculties, or any means or instruments, but is properly the workmanship and production of the Spirit of the Almighty, is it a strange and unaccountable thing, that it should seem to them who are subjects of it, agreeable to truth, and not right contrary to truth; so that if persons tell of effects that they are conscious to in their own minds, that seem to them not to be from the natural power or operation of their minds, but from the supernatural power of some

* That famous experimental divine, Mr. Shepherd, says, "A Pharisee's trumpet shall be heard to the town's end; when simplicity walks through the town unseen. Hence a man will sometimes covertly commend himself (and *myself* ever comes in), and tells you a long story of conversion; and a hundred to one if some lie or other slip not out with it. Why, the secret meaning is, *I pray admire me.* Hence complain of wants and weaknesses: *Pray think what a broken-hearted Christian I am.*" *Parab. of the Ten Virgins.* Part I. pages 179, 180.

And holy Mr. Flavel says thus: "O reader, if thy heart were right with God, and thou didst not cheat thyself with a vain profession, thou wouldst have frequent business with God, which thou wouldst be loth thy dearest friend, or the wife of thy bosom should be privy to. *Non est religio, ubi omnia patent.* Religion doth not lie open to all, to the eyes of men. Observed duties maintain our credit; but secret duties maintain our life. It was the saying of a heathen, about his secret correspondency with his friend, *What need the world be acquainted with it? Thou and I are theatre enough to each other.* There are inclosed pleasures in religion, which none but renewed spiritual souls do feelingly understand." *Flavel's Touchstone of Sincerity*, Chap. II. Sect. 2.

other agent, it should at once be looked upon as a sure evidence of their being under a delusion, because things seem to them to be as they are? For this is the objection which is made: it is looked upon as a clear evidence, that the apprehensions and affections that many persons have, are not really from such a cause, because they seem to them to be from that cause: they declare that what they are conscious of, seems to them evidently not to be from themselves, but from the mighty power of the Spirit of God; and others from hence condemn them, and determine what they experience is not from the Spirit of God, but from themselves, or from the devil. Thus unreasonably are multitudes treated at this day by their neighbors.

If it be indeed so, as the Scripture abundantly teaches, that grace in the soul is so the effect of God's power, that it is fitly compared to those effects which are farthest from being owing to any strength in the subject, such as a generation, or a being begotten, and resurrection, or a being raised from the dead, and creation, or a being brought out of nothing into being, and that it is an effect wherein the mighty power of God is greatly glorified, and the exceeding greatness of his power is manifested;* then what account can be given of it, that the Almighty, in so great a work of his power, should so carefully hide his power, that the subjects of it should be able to discern nothing of it? Or what reason or revelation have any to determine that he does so? If we may judge by the Scripture this is not agreeable to God's manner, in his operations and dispensations; but on the contrary, it is God's manner, in the great works of his power and mercy which he works for his people, to order things so as to make his hand visible, and his power conspicuous, and men's dependence on him most evident, that no flesh should glory in his presence,† that God alone might be exalted,‡ and that the excellency of the power might be of God and not of man,§ and that Christ's power might be manifested in our weakness,‖ and none might say mine own hand hath saved me.¶ So it was in most of those temporal salvations which God wrought for Israel of old, which were types of the salvation of God's people from their spiritual enemies. So it was in the redemption of Israel from their Egyptian bondage; he redeemed them with a strong hand, and an outstretched arm; and that his power might be the more conspicuous, he suffered Israel first to be brought into the most helpless and forlorn circumstances. So it was in the great redemption by Gideon; God would have his army diminished to a handful, and they without any other arms than trumpets and lamps, and earthen pitchers. So it was in the deliverance of Israel from Goliath, by a stripling with a sling and a stone. So it was in that great work of God, his calling the Gentiles, and converting the Heathen world, after Christ's ascension, after that the world by wisdom knew not God, and all the endeavors of philosophers had proved in vain, for many ages, to reform the world, and it was by every thing become abundantly evident, that the world was utterly helpless, by any thing else but the mighty power of God. And so it was in most of the conversions of particular persons, we have an account of in the history of the New Testament: they were not wrought on in that silent, secret, gradual, and insensible manner, which is now insisted on; but with those manifest evidences of a supernatural power, wonderfully and suddenly causing a great change, which in these days are looked upon as certain signs of delusion and enthusiasm.

The Apostle, in Eph. i. 18, 19, speaks of God's enlightening the minds of Christians, and so bringing them to believe in Christ, to the end that they might know the exceeding greatness of his power to them who believe. The words

* Eph. i. 17—20 † 1 Cor. i. 27, 28, 29. ‡ Isa. ii. 11—17. § 2 Cor. iv. 7. ‖ 2 Cor. xii. 9. ¶ Judg. vii. 2

are, "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power," &c. Now when the apostle speaks of their being thus the subjects of his power, in their enlightening and effectual calling, to the end that they might know what his mighty power was to them who believe, he can mean nothing else than, "that they might know by experience." But if the saints know this power by experience, then they feel it and discern it, and are conscious of it; as sensibly distinguishable from the natural operations of their own minds, which is not agreeable to a notion of God's operating so secretly, and undiscernably, that it cannot be known that they are the subjects of the influence of any extrinsic power at all, any otherwise than as they may argue it from Scripture assertions; which is a different thing from knowing it by experience.

So that it is very unreasonable and unscriptural to determine that affections are not from the gracious operations of God's Spirit, because they are sensibly not from the persons themselves that are the subjects of them.

On the other hand, it is no evidence that affections are gracious, that they are not properly produced by those who are the subjects of them, or that they arise in their minds in a manner they cannot account for.

There are some who make this an argument in their own favor; when speaking of what they have experienced, they say, "I am sure I did not make it myself; it was a fruit of no contrivance or endeavor of mine; it came when I thought nothing of it; if I might have the world for it, I cannot make it again when I please." And hence they determine that what they have experienced, must be from the mighty influence of the Spirit of God, and is of a saving nature; but very ignorantly, and without grounds. What they have been the subjects of, may indeed not be from themselves directly, but may be from the operation of an invisible agent, some spirit besides their own: but it does not thence follow, that it was from the Spirit of God. There are other spirits who have influence on the minds of men, besides the Holy Ghost. We are directed not to believe every spirit, but to try the spirits, whether they be of God. There are many false spirits, exceeding busy with men, who often transform themselves into angels of light, and do in many wonderful ways, with great subtilty and power, mimic the operations of the Spirit of God. And there are many of Satan's operations, which are very distinguishable from the voluntary exercises of men's own minds. They are so, in those dreadful and horrid suggestions, and blasphemous injections with which he follows many persons; and in vain and fruitless frights and terrors, which he is the author of. And the power of Satan may be as immediate, and as evident in false comforts and joys, as in terrors and horrid suggestions; and oftentimes is so in fact. It is not in men's power to put themselves in such raptures, as the Anabaptists in Germany, and many other raving enthusiasts like them, have been the subjects of.

And besides, it is to be considered that persons may have those impressions on their minds, which may not be of their own producing, nor from an evil spirit, but from the Spirit of God, and yet not be from any saving, but a common influence of the Spirit of God; and the subjects of such impressions may be of the number of those we read of, Heb. vi. 4, 5, "that are once enlightened, and taste of the heavenly gift, and are made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and taste the good word of God, and the power of the world to come;" and yet may be wholly unacquainted with those "better things that accompany salvation," spoken of ver. 9.

And where neither a good nor evil spirit have any immediate hand, persons, especially such as are of a weak and vapory habit of body, and the brain weak and easily susceptive of impressions, may have strange apprehensions and imaginations, and strong affections attending them, unaccountably arising, which are not voluntarily produced by themselves. We see that such persons are liable to such impressions about temporal things; and there is equal reason, why they should about spiritual things. As a person who is asleep has dreams that he is not the voluntary author of; so may such persons, in like manner, be the subjects of involuntary impressions, when they are awake.

V. It is no sign that religious affections are truly holy and spiritual, or that they are not, that they come with texts of Scripture, remarkably brought to the mind.

It is no sign that affections are not gracious, that they are occasioned by Scriptures so coming to mind; provided it be the Scripture itself, or the truth which the Scripture so brought contains and teaches, that is the foundation of the affection, and not merely, or mainly, the sudden and unusual manner of its coming to the mind.

But on the other hand, neither is it any sign that affections are gracious, that they arise on occasion of Scriptures brought suddenly and wonderfully to the mind; whether those affections be fear or hope, joy or sorrow, or any other. Some seem to look upon this as a good evidence that their affections are saving, especially if the affections excited are hope or joy, or any other which are pleasing and delightful. They will mention it as an evidence that all is right, that their experience came with the word, and will say, "There were such and such sweet promises brought to my mind: they came suddenly, as if they were spoken to me: I had no hand in bringing such a text to my own mind; I was not thinking of any thing leading to it; it came all at once, so that I was surprised. I had not thought of it a long time before; I did not know at first that it was Scripture; I did not remember that ever I had read it." And it may be, they will add, "One Scripture came flowing in after another, and so texts all over the Bible, the most sweet and pleasant, and the most apt and suitable which could be devised; and filled me full as I could hold: I could not but stand and admire: the tears flowed; I was full of joy, and could not doubt any longer." And thus they think they have undoubted evidence that their affections must be from God, and of the right kind, and their state good: but without any manner of grounds. How came they by any such rule, as that if any affections or experiences arise with promises, and comfortable texts of Scripture, unaccountably brought to mind, without their recollection, or if a great number of sweet texts follow one another in a chain, that this is a certain evidence their experiences are saving? Where is any such rule to be found in the Bible, the great and only sure directory in things of this nature?

What deceives many of the less understanding and considerate sort of people, in this matter, seems to be this; that the Scripture is the word of God, and has nothing in it which is wrong, but is pure and perfect; and therefore, those experiences which come from the Scripture must be right. But then it should be considered, affections may arise on occasion of the Scripture, and not properly come from the Scripture, as the genuine fruit of the Scripture, and by a right use of it; but from an abuse of it. All that can be argued from the purity and perfection of the word of God, with respect to experiences, is this, that those experiences which are agreeable to the word of God, are right, and cannot be otherwise; and not that those affections must be right, which arise on occasion of the word of God coming to the mind.

What evidence is there that the devil cannot bring texts of Scripture to the mind, and misapply them to deceive persons? There seems to be nothing in this which exceeds the power of Satan. It is no work of such mighty power, to bring sounds or letters to persons' minds, that we have any reason to suppose nothing short of Omnipotence can be sufficient for it. If Satan has power to bring any words or sounds at all to persons' minds, he may have power to bring words contained in the Bible. There is no higher sort of power required in men, to make the sounds which express the words of a text of Scripture, than to make the sounds which express the words of an idle story or song. And so the same power in Satan, which is sufficient to renew one of those kinds of sounds in the mind, is sufficient to renew the other: the different signification, which depends wholly on custom, alters not the case, as to ability to make or revive the sounds or letters. Or will any suppose, that texts or Scriptures are such sacred things, that the devil durst not abuse them, nor touch them? In this also they are mistaken. He who was bold enough to lay hold on Christ himself, and carry him hither and thither, into the wilderness, and into a high mountain, and to a pinnacle of the temple, is not afraid to touch the Scripture, and abuse that for his own purpose; as he showed at the same time that he was so bold with Christ, he then brought one Scripture and another, to deceive and tempt him. And if Satan did presume, and was permitted to put Christ himself in mind of texts of Scripture to tempt *him*, what reason have we determine that he dare not, or will not be permitted, to put wicked men in the mind of texts of Scripture, to tempt and deceive *them?* And if Satan may thus abuse one text of Scripture, so he may another. Its being a very excellent place of Scripture, a comfortable and precious promise, alters not the case, as to his courage or ability. And if he can bring one comfortable text to the mind, so he may a thousand; and may choose out such Scriptures as tend most to serve his purpose; and may heap up Scripture promises, tending, according to the perverse application he makes of them, wonderfully to remove the rising doubts, and to confirm the false joy and confidence of a poor deluded sinner.

We know the devil's instruments, corrupt and heretical teachers, can and do pervert the Scripture, to their own and others' damnation, 2 Pet. iii. 16. We see they have the free use of Scripture, in every part of it: there is no text so precious and sacred, but they are permitted to abuse it, to the eternal ruin of multitudes of souls; and there are no weapons they make use of with which they do more execution. And there is no manner of reason to determine, that the devil is not permitted thus to use the Scripture, as well as his instruments. For when the latter do it, they do it as his instruments and servants, and through his instigation and influence: and doubtless he does the same he instigates others to do; the devil's servants do but follow their master, and do the same work that he does himself.

And as the devil can abuse the Scripture, to deceive and destroy men, so may men's own folly and corruptions as well. The sin which is in men, acts like its father. Men's own hearts are deceitful like the devil, and use the same means to deceive.

So that it is evident, that any person may have high affections of hope and joy, arising on occasion of texts of Scripture, yea, precious promises of Scripture coming suddenly and remarkably to their minds, as though they were spoken to them, yea, a great multitude of such texts, following one another in a wonderful manner; and yet all this be no argument that these affections are divine, or that they are any other than the effects of Satan's delusions.

And I would further observe, that persons may have raised and joyful affec-

tions, which may come with the word of God, and not only so, but from the word, and those affections not be from Satan, nor yet properly from the corruptions of their own hearts, but from some influence of the Spirit of God with the word, and yet have nothing of the nature of true and saving religion in them. Thus the stony ground hearers had great joy from the word; yea, which is represented as arising from the word, as growth from a seed; and their affections had, in their appearance, a very great and exact resemblance with those represented by the growth on the good ground, the difference not appearing until it was discovered by the consequences in a time of trial: and yet there was no saving religion in these affections.*

VI. It is no evidence that religious affections are saving, or that they are otherwise, that there is an appearance of love in them.

There are no professing Christians who pretend, that this is an argument against the truth and saving nature of religious affections. But, on the other hand, there are some who suppose, it is a good evidence that affections are from the sanctifying and saving influences of the Holy Ghost.—Their argument is that Satan cannot love; this affection being directly contrary to the devil, whose very nature is enmity and malice. And it is true, that nothing is more excellent, heavenly, and divine, than a spirit of true Christian love to God and men: it is more excellent than knowledge, or prophecy, or miracles, or speaking with the tongue of men and angels. It is the chief of the graces of God's Spirit, and the life, essence and sum of all true religion; and that by which we are most conformed to heaven, and most contrary to hell and the devil. But yet it is ill arguing from hence, that there are no counterfeits of it. It may be observed that the more excellent any thing is, the more will be the counterfeits of it. Thus there are many more counterfeits of silver and gold, than of iron and copper: there are many false diamonds and rubies, but who goes about to counterfeit common stones? Though the more excellent things are, the more difficult it is to make any thing that shall be like them, in their essential nature and internal virtues; yet the more manifold will the counterfeits be, and the more will art and subtilty be displayed, in an exact imitation of the outward appearance. Thus there is the greatest danger of being cheated in buying of medicines that are most excellent and sovereign, though it be most difficult to imitate them with any thing of the like value and virtue, and their counterfeits are good for nothing when we have them. So it is with Christian virtues and graces; the subtilty of Satan, and men's deceitful hearts, are wont chiefly to be exercised in counterfeiting those that are in highest repute. So there are perhaps no graces that have more counterfeits than love and humility; these being virtues wherein the beauty of a true Christian does especially appear.

But with respect to love; it is plain by the Scripture, that persons may have a kind of religious love, and yet have no saving grace. Christ speaks of many professing Christians that have such love, whose love will not continue, and so shall fail of salvation, Matt. xxiv. 12, 13: "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." Which latter words plainly show, that those spoken of before, whose love shall not endure to the end, but wax cold, should not be saved.

Persons may seem to have love to God and Christ, yea, to have very strong

* Mr. Stoddard in his *Guide to Christ*, speaks of it as a common thing, for persons while in a natural condition, and before they have ever truly accepted of Christ, to have Scripture promises come to them, with a great deal of refreshing: which they take as tokens of God's love, and hope that God has accepted them; and so are confident of their good estate Pages 8, 9. Impression *anno* 1735.

and violent affections of this nature, and yet have no grace. For this was evidently the case with many graceless Jews, such as cried Jesus up so high, following him day and night, without meat, drink, or sleep; such as said, "Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest," and cried, "Hosanna to the Son of David."*

The apostle seems to intimate, that there were many in his days who had a counterfeit love to Christ, in Eph. vi. 24: "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." The last word, in the original, signifies *incorruption;* which shows, that the apostle was sensible that there were many who had a kind of love to Christ, whose love was not pure and spiritual.

So also Christian love to the people of God may be counterfeited. It is evident by the Scripture, that there may be strong affections of this kind, without saving grace; as there were in the Galatians towards the Apostle Paul, when they were ready to pluck out their eyes and give them to him; although the apostle expresses his fear that their affections were come to nothing, and that he had bestowed upon them labor in vain, Gal. iv. 11, 15.

VII. Persons having religious affections of many kinds, accompanying one another, is not sufficient to determine whether they have any gracious affections or no.

Though false religion is wont to be maimed and monstrous, and not to have that entireness and symmetry of parts, which is to be seen in true religion: yet there may be a great variety of false affections together, that may resemble gracious affections.

It is evident that there are counterfeits of all kinds of gracious affections; as of love to God, and love to the brethren, as has been just now observed; so of godly sorrow for sin, as in Pharaoh, Saul, and Ahab, and the children of Israel in the wilderness, Exod. ix. 27, 1 Sam. xxiv. 16, 17, and xxvi. 21, 1 Kings xxi. 27, Numb. xiv. 39, 40; and of the fear of God, as in the Samaritans, "who feared the Lord, and served their own gods at the same time," 2 Kings xvii. 32, 33; and those enemies of God we read of, Psal. lxvi. 3, who, "through the greatness of God's power, submit themselves to him," or, as it is in the Hebrew, "lie unto him," i. e., yield a counterfeit reverence and submission. So of a gracious gratitude, as in the children of Israel, who sang God's praise at the Red Sea, Psal. cvi. 12; and Naaman the Syrian, after his miraculous cure of his leprosy, 2 Kings v. 15, &c.

So of spiritual joy, as in the stony ground hearers, Matt. xiii. 20, and particularly many of John the Baptist's hearers, John v. 35. So of zeal, as in Jehu, 2 Kings x. 16, and in Paul before his conversion, Gal. i. 14, Phil. iii. 6, and the unbelieving Jews, Acts xxii. 3, Rom. x. 2. So graceless persons may have earnest religious desires, which may be like Baalam's desires, which he expresses under an extraordinary view that he had of the happy state of God's people, as distinguished from all the rest of the world, Numb. xxiii. 9, 10. They may also have a strong hope of eternal life, as the Pharisees had.

And as men, while in a state of nature, are capable of a resemblance of all kinds of religious affections, so nothing hinders but that they may have many of them together. And what appears in fact, does abundantly evince that it is very often so indeed. It seems commonly to be so, that when false affections are raised high, many false affections attend each other. The multitude that attended

* Agreeable to this, Mr. Stoddard observes, in his Guide to Christ, that some sinners have pangs of affection, and give an account that they find a spirit of love to God, and of their aiming at the glory of God, having that which has a great resemblance of saving grace; and that sometimes their common affections are stronger than saving. And supposes, that sometimes natural men may have such violent pangs of false affection to God, that they may think themselves willing to be damned. Pages 21, and 65.

Christ into Jerusalem, after that great miracle of raising Lazarus, seem to have been moved with many religious affections at once, and all in a high degree. They seem to have been filled with admiration, and there was a show of a high affection of love, and also of a great degree of reverence, in their laying their garments on the ground for Christ to tread upon; and also of great gratitude to him, for the great and good works he had wrought, praising him with loud voices for his salvation; and earnest desires of the coming of God's kingdom, which they supposed Jesus was now about to set up, and showed great hopes and raised expectations of it, expecting it would immediately appear; and hence were filled with joy, by which they were so animated in their acclamations, as to make the whole city ring with the noise of them; and appeared great in their zeal and forwardness to attend Jesus, and assist him without further delay, now in the time of the great feast of the passover, to set up his kingdom. And it is easy, from nature, and the nature of the affections, to give an account why, when one affection is raised very high, that it should excite others; especially if the affection which is raised high, be that of counterfeit love, as it was in the multitude who cried Hosanna. This will naturally draw many other affections after it. For, as was observed before, love is the chief of the affections, and as it were the fountain of them. Let us suppose a person who has been for some time in great exercise and terror through fear of hell, and his heart weakened with distress and dreadful apprehensions, and upon the brink of despair, and is all at once delivered, by being firmly made to believe, through some delusion of Satan, that God has pardoned him, and accepts him as the object of his dear love, and promises him eternal life; as suppose through some vision, or strong idea or imagination, suddenly excited in him, of a person with a beautiful countenance, smiling on him, and with arms open, and with blood dropping down, which the person conceives to be Christ, without any other enlightening of the understanding, to give a view of the spiritual divine excellency of Christ and his fulness; and of the way of salvation revealed in the gospel: or perhaps by some voice or words coming as if they were spoken to him, such as these, "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee;" or, "Fear not, it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom," which he takes to be immediately spoken by God to him, though there was no preceding acceptance of Christ, or closing of the heart with him: I say, if we should suppose such a case, what various passions would naturally crowd at once, or one after another, into such a person's mind! It is easy to be accounted for, from mere principles of nature, that a person's heart, on such an occasion, should be raised up to the skies with transports of joy; and be filled with fervent affection, to that imaginary God or Redeemer, who he supposes has thus rescued him from the jaws of such dreadful destruction, that his soul was so amazed with the fears of, and has received him with such endearment, as a peculiar favorite; and that now he should be filled with admiration and gratitude, and his mouth should be opened, and be full of talk about what he has experienced; and that, for a while, he should think and speak of scarce any thing else, and should seem to magnify that God who has done so much for him, and call upon others to rejoice with him, and appear with a cheerful countenance, and talk with a loud voice: and however, before his deliverance, he was full of quarrellings against the justice of God, that now it should be easy for him to submit to God, and own his unworthiness, and cry out against himself, and appear to be very humble before God, and lie at his feet as tame as a lamb; and that he should now confess his unworthiness, and cry out, "Why me? Why me?" (Like Saul, who when Samuel told him that God had appointed him to be king, makes answer, "Am

not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel, and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? Wherefore then speakest thou so to me?" Much in the language of David, the true saint, 2 Sam. vii. 18, "Who am I, and what is my father's house, that thou has brought me hitherto?") Nor is it to be wondered at, that now he should delight to be with them who acknowledge and applaud his happy circumstances, and should love all such as esteem and admire him and what he has experienced, and have violent zeal against all such as would make nothing of such things, and be disposed openly to separate, and as it were to proclaim war with all who be not of his party, and should now glory in his sufferings, and be very much for condemning and censuring all who seem to doubt, or make any difficulty of these things; and while the warmth of his affections lasts, should be mighty forward to take pains, and deny himself, to promote the interest of the party who he imagines favors such things, and seem earnestly desirous to increase the number of them, as the Pharisees compassed sea and land to make one *proselyte.** And so I might go on, and mention many other things, which will naturally arise in such circumstances. He must have but slightly considered human nature, who thinks such things as these cannot arise in this manner, without any supernatural interposition of divine power.

As from true divine love flow all Christian affections, so from a counterfeit love in like manner naturally flow other false affections. In both cases, love is the fountain, and the other affections are the streams. The various faculties, principles, and affections of the human nature, are as it were many channels from one fountain: if there be sweet water in the fountain, sweet water will from thence flow out into those various channels; but if the water in the fountain be poisonous, then poisonous streams will also flow out into all those channels. So that the channels and streams will be alike, corresponding one with another; but the great difference will lie in the nature of the water. Or, man's nature may be compared to a tree, with many branches, coming from one root: if the sap in the root be good, there will also be good sap distributed throughout the branches, and the fruit that is brought forth will be good and wholesome; but if the sap in the root and stock be poisonous, so it will be in many branches (as in the other case), and the fruit will be deadly. The tree in both cases may be alike; there may be an exact resemblance in shape; but the difference is found only in eating the fruit. It is thus (in some measure at least) oftentimes between saints and hypocrites. There is sometimes a very great similitude between true and false experiences, in their appearance, and in what is expressed and related by the subjects of them: and the difference between them is much like the difference between the dreams of Pharaoh's chief butler and baker; they seemed to be much alike, insomuch that when Joseph interpreted the chief butler's dream, that he should be delivered from his imprisonment, and restored to the king's favor, and his honorable office in the palace, the chief baker had raised hopes and expectations, and told his dream also; but he was wofully disappointed; and though his dream was so much like the happy and well boding dream of his companion, yet it was quite contrary in its issue.

VIII. Nothing can certainly be determined concerning the nature of the affections, by this, that comforts and joys seem to follow awakenings and convictions of conscience, in a certain order.

* "Associating with godly men does not prove that a man has grace: Ahithophel was David's companion. Sorrows for the afflictions of the church, and desires for the conversion of souls, do not prove it. These things may be found in carnal men, and so can be no evidence of grace."—Stoddard's *Nature of Saving Conversion*, p. 82.

Many persons seem to be prejudiced against affections and experiences that come in such a method, as has been much insisted on by many divines; first, such awakenings, fears, and awful apprehensions, followed with such legal humblings, in a sense of total sinfulness and helplessness, and then, such and such light and comfort; they look upon all such schemes, laying down such methods and steps, to be of men's devising; and particularly if high affections of joy follow great distress and terror, it is made by many an argument against those affections. But such prejudices and objections are without reason or Scripture. Surely it cannot be unreasonable to suppose, that before God delivers persons from a state of sin and exposedness to eternal destruction, he should give them some considerable sense of the evil he delivers from; that they may be delivered sensibly, and understand their own salvation, and know something of what God does for them. As men that are saved are in two exceeding different states, first a state of condemnation, and then in a state of justification and blessedness: and as God, in the work of the salvation of mankind, deals with them suitably to their intelligent rational nature; so its seems reasonable, and agreeable to God's wisdom, that men who are saved should be in these two states sensibly; first, that they should, sensibly to themselves, be in a state of condemnation, and so in a state of woful calamity and dreadful misery, and so afterwards in a state of deliverance and happiness; and that they should be first sensible of their absolute extreme necessity, and afterwards of Christ's sufficiency and God's mercy through him.

And that it is God's manner of dealing with men, to "lead them into a wilderness, before he speaks comfortably to them," and so to order it, that they shall be brought into distress, and made to see their own helplessness and absolute dependence on his power and grace, before he appears to work any great deliverance for them, is abundantly manifest by the Scripture. Then is God wont to "repent himself for his professing people, when their strength is gone, and there is none shut up or left," and when they are brought to see that their false gods cannot help them, and that the rock in whom they trusted is vain, Deut. xxxii. 36, 37. Before God delivered the children of Israel out of Egypt, they were prepared for it, by being made to "see that they were in an evil case," and "to cry unto God, because of their hard bondage," Exod. ii. 23, and v. 19. And before God wrought that great deliverance for them at the Red Sea, they were brought into great distress, the wilderness had shut them in, they could not turn to the right hand nor the left, and the Red Sea was before them, and the great Egyptian host behind, and they were brought to see that they could do nothing to help themselves, and that if God did not help them, they should be immediately swallowed up; and then God appeared, and turned their cries into songs. So before they were brought to their rest, and to enjoy the milk and honey of Canaan, God "led them through a great and terrible wilderness, that he might humble them and teach them what was in their heart, and so do them good in their latter end," Deut. viii. 2, 16. The woman that had the issue of blood twelve years, was not delivered, until she had first "spent all her living on earthly physicians, and could not be healed of any," and so was left helpless, having no more money to spend; and then she came to the great Physician, without any money or price, and was healed by him, Luke viii. 43, 44. Before Christ would answer the request of the woman of Canaan, he first seemed utterly to deny her, and humbled her, and brought her to own herself worthy to be called a dog; and then he showed her mercy, and received her as a dear child, Matt. xv. 22, &c. The Apostle Paul, before a remarkable deliverance, was "pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that he despaired even

of life; but had the sentence of death in himself, that he might not trust in himself, but in God that raiseth the dead," 2 Cor. i. 8, 9, 10. There was first a great tempest, and the ship was covered with the waves, and just ready to sink, and the disciples were brought to cry to Jesus, "Lord save us, we perish;" and then the winds and seas were rebuked, and there was a great calm, Matt. viii. 24, 25, 26. The leper, before he is cleansed, must have his mouth stopped, by a covering on his upper lip, and was to acknowledge his great misery and utter uncleanness, by rending his clothes, and crying, "Unclean, unclean," Lev. xiii. 45. And backsliding Israel, before God heals them, are brought to "acknowledge that they have sinned, and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord," and to see that "they lie down in their shame, and that confusion covers them," and "that in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains," and that God only can save them, Jer. iii. 23, 24, 25. Joseph, who was sold by his brethren, and therein was a type of Christ, brings his brethren into great perplexity and distress, and brings them to reflect on their sin, and to say, We are verily guilty; and at last to resign up themselves entirely into his hands for bondmen; and then reveals himself to them, as their brother and their saviour.

And if we consider those extraordinary manifestations which God made of himself to saints of old, we shall find that he commonly first manifested himself in a way which was terrible, and then by those things that were comfortable. So it was with Abraham; first, a horror of great darkness fell upon him, and then God revealed himself to him in sweet promises, Gen. xv. 12, 13. So it was with Moses at Mount Sinai; first, God appeared to him in all the terrors of his dreadful Majesty, so that Moses said, "I exceedingly fear and quake," and then he made all his goodness to pass before him, and proclaimed his name, "The Lord God gracious and merciful," &c. So it was with Elijah; first, there is a stormy wind, and earthquake, and devouring fire, and then a still, small, sweet voice, 1 Kings xix. So it was with Daniel; he first saw Christ's countenance as lightning, that terrified him, and caused him to faint away; and then he is strengthened and refreshed with such comfortable words as these, "O Daniel, a man greatly beloved," Dan. x. So it was with the apostle John, Rev. i. And there is an analogy observable in God's dispensations and deliverances which he works for his people, and the manifestations which he makes of himself to them, both ordinary and extraordinary.

But there are many things in Scripture which do more directly show, that this is God's ordinary manner in working salvation for the souls of men, and in the manifestations God makes of himself and of his mercy in Christ, in the ordinary works of his grace on the hearts of sinners. The servant that owed his prince ten thousand talents, is first held to his debt, and the king pronounces sentence of condemnation upon him, and commands him to be sold, and his wife and children, and payment to be made; and thus he humbles him, and brings him to own the whole of the debt to be just, and then forgives him all. The prodigal son spends all he has, and is brought to see himself in extreme circumstances, and to humble himself, and own his unworthiness, before he is relieved and feasted by his father, Luke xv. Old inveterate wounds must be searched to the bottom, in order to healing: and the Scripture compares sin, the wound of the soul, to this, and speaks of healing this wound without thus searching of it, as vain and deceitful, Jer. vii. 11. Christ, in the work of his grace on the hearts of men, is compared to rain on the new mown grass, grass that is cut down with a scythe, Psal. lxxii. 6, representing his refreshing, comforting influences on the wounded spirit. Our first parents, after they had sinned, were first terri-

fied with God's majesty and justice, and had their sin, with its aggravations, set before them by their Judge, before they where relieved by the promise of the seed of the woman. Christians are spoken of as those "that have fled for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before them," Heb. vi. 18, which representation implies great fear and sense of danger, preceding. To the like purpose, Christ is called "a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, and as rivers of water in a dry place, and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land," Isa. xxxii. at the beginning. And it seems to be the natural import of the word *gospel*, glad tidings, that it is news of deliverance and salvation, after great fear and distress. There is also reason to suppose, that God deals with particular believers, as he dealt with his church, which he first made to hear his voice in the law, with terrible thunders and lightnings, and kept her under that schoolmaster to prepare her for Christ; and then comforted her with the joyful sound of the gospel from Mount Zion. So likewise John the Baptist came to prepare the way for Christ, and prepare men's hearts for his reception, by showing them their sins, and by bringing the self-righteous Jews off from their own righteousness, telling them that they were "a generation of vipers," and showing them their danger of "the wrath to come," telling them that "the axe was laid at the root of the trees," &c.

And if it be indeed God's manner (as I think the foregoing considerations show that it undoubtedly is), before he gives men the comfort of a deliverance from their sin and misery, to give them a considerable sense of the greatness and dreadfulness of those evils, and their extreme wretchedness by reason of them; surely it is not unreasonable to suppose, that persons, at least oftentimes, while under these views, should have great distresses and terrible apprehensions of mind; especially if it be considered what these evils are that they have a view of; which are no other than great and manifold sins, against the infinite majesty of the great Jehovah, and the suffering of the fierceness of his wrath to all eternity. And the more so still, when we have many plain instances in Scripture of persons that have actually been brought into great distress, by such convictions, before they have received saving consolations: as the multitude at Jerusalem, who were "pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" And the apostle Paul, who trembled and was astonished, before he was comforted; and the gaoler, when "he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

From these things it appears to be very unreasonable in professing Christians to make this an objection against the truth and spiritual nature of the comfortable and joyful affections which any have, that they follow such awful apprehensions and distresses as have been mentioned.

And, on the other hand, it is no evidence that comforts and joys are right, because they succeed great terrors, and amazing fears of hell.* This seems to be what some persons lay a great weight upon; esteeming great terrors an evidence of the great work of the law wrought on the heart, well preparing the way for solid comfort; not considering that terror and a conviction of conscience are different things. For though convictions of conscience do often cause terror; yet they do not consist in it; and terrors do often arise from other causes. Convictions of conscience, through the influences of God's Spirit, consist in conviction

* Mr. Shepard speaks of "men's being cast down as low as hell by sorrow and lying under chains, quaking in apprehension of terror to come, and then raised up to heaven in joy, not able to live; and yet not rent from lust: and such are objects of pity now, and are like to be the objects of terror at the great day"—*Parable of the Ten Virgins*, Part I. p. 125.

of sinfulness of heart and practice, and of the dreadfulness of sin, as committed against a God of terrible majesty, infinite holiness and hatred of sin, and strict justice in punishing of it. But there are some persons that have frightful apprehensions of hell, a dreadful pit ready to swallow them up, and flames just ready to lay hold of them, and devils around them, ready to seize them; who at the same time seem to have very little proper enlightenings of conscience really convincing them of their sinfulness of heart and life. The devil, if permitted, can terrify men as well as the Spirit of God; it is a work natural to him, and he has many ways of doing it, in a manner tending to no good.

He may exceedingly affright persons, by impressing on them images and ideas of many external things, of a countenance frowning, a sword drawn, black clouds of vengeance, words of an awful doom pronounced,* hell gaping, devils coming, and the like, not to convince persons of things that are true, and revealed in the word of God, but to lead them to vain and groundless determinations; as that their day is past, that they are reprobated, that God is implacable, that he has come to a resolution immediately to cut them off, &c.

And the terrors which some persons have, are very much owing to the particular constitution and temper they are of. Nothing is more manifest than that some persons are of such a temper and frame, that their imaginations are more strongly impressed with every thing they are affected with, than others; and the impression on the imagination reacts on the affection, and raises that still higher; and so affection and imagination act reciprocally, one on another, till their affection is raised to a vast height, and the person is swallowed up, and loses all possession of himself.†

And some speak of a great sight they have of their wickedness, who really, when the matter comes to be well examined into and thoroughly weighed, are found to have little or no convictions of conscience. They tell of a dreadful hard heart, and how their heart lies like a stone; when truly they have none of those things in their minds or thoughts, wherein the hardness of men's heart does really consist. They tell of a dreadful load and sink of sin, a heap of black and loathsome filthiness within them; when, if the matter be carefully inquired into, they have not in view any thing wherein the corruption of nature does truly consist, nor have they any thought of any particular thing wherein their hearts are sinfully defective, or fall short of what ought to be in them, or any exercises at all of corruption in them. And many think also they have great convictions of their actual sins, who truly have none. They tell how their sins are set in order before them, they see them stand encompassing them round in a row, with a dreadful, frightful appearance; when really they have not so much as one of the sins they have been guilty of in the course of their lives, coming into view, that they are affected with the aggravations of.

And if persons have had great terrors which really have been from the awakening and convincing influences of the Spirit of God, it doth not thence follow that their terrors must needs issue in true comfort. The unmortified corruption of the heart may quench the Spirit of God (after he has been striving)

* "The way of the Spirit's working when it does convince men, is by enlightening natural conscience. The Spirit does not work by giving a testimony, but by assisting natural conscience to do its work. Natural conscience is the instrument in the hand of God to accuse, condemn, terrify, and to urge to duty. The Spirit of God leads men into the consideration of their danger, and makes them to be affected therewith; Prov. xx. 17, "*The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly.*" Stoddard's *Guide to Christ*, page 44.

† The famous Mr. Perkins distinguishes between "those sorrows that come through convictions of conscience, and melancholic passions arising only from mere imagination, strongly conceived in the brain; which, he says, usually come on a sudden, like lightning into a house."—Vol. I. of his works, page 385.

by leading men to presumptuous, and self-exalting hopes and joys, as well as otherwise. It is not every woman who is really in travail, that brings forth a real child; but it may be a monstrous production, without any thing of the form or properties of human nature belonging to it. Pharaoh's chief baker, after he had lain in the dungeon with Joseph, had a vision that raised his hopes, and he was lifted out of the dungeon, as well as the chief butler; but it was to be hanged.

But if comforts and joys do not only come after great terrors and awakenings, but there be an appearance of such preparatory convictions and humiliations, and brought about very distinctly, by such steps, and in such a method, as has frequently been observable in true converts; this is no certain sign that the light and comforts which follow are true and saving. And for these following reasons:

First, As the devil can counterfeit all the saving operations and graces of the Spirit of God, so he can counterfeit those operations that are preparatory to grace. If Satan can counterfeit those effects of God's Spirit, which are special, divine and sanctifying, so that there shall be a very great resemblance, in all that can be observed by others; much more easily may he imitate those works of God's Spirit which are common, and which men, while they are yet his own children, are the subjects of. These works are in no wise so much above him as the other. There are no works of God that are so high and divine, and above the powers of nature, and out of reach of the power of all creatures, as those works of his Spirit, whereby he forms the creature in his own image, and makes it to be a partaker of the divine nature. But if the devil can be the author of such resemblances of these as have been spoken of, without doubt he may of those that are of an infinitely inferior kind. And it is abundantly evident in fact, that there are false humiliations and false submissions, as well as false comforts.* How far was Saul brought, though a very wicked man, and of a haughty spirit, when he (though a great king) was brought, in conviction of his sin, as it were to fall down, all in tears, weeping aloud, before David his own subject (and one that he had for a long time mortally hated, and openly treated as an enemy), and condemn himself before him, crying out, "Thou art more righteous than I: for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil!" And at another time, "I have sinned, I have played the fool, I have erred exceedingly," 1 Sam. xxiv. 16, 17, and chap. xxvi. 21. And yet Saul seems then to have had very little of the influences of the Spirit of God, it being after God's Spirit had departed from him, and given him up, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him. And if this proud monarch, in a pang of affection, was brought to humble himself so low before a subject that he hated, and still continued an enemy to, there doubtless may be appearances of great conviction and humiliation in men, before God, while they yet remain enemies to him, and though they finally continue so. There is oftentimes in men who are terrified through fears of hell, a great appearance of their being brought off from their own righteousness, when they are not brought off from it in all ways, although they are in many ways that are more plain and visible. They have only exchanged some ways of trusting in their own righteousness, for others that are more secret and subtle. Oftentimes a great degree of discourage-

* The venerable Mr. Stoddard observes, "A man may say, that now he can justify God however he deals with him, and not be brought off from his own righteousness; and that some men do justify God from a partial conviction of the righteousness of their condemnation; conscience takes notice of their sinfulness, and tells them that they may be righteously damned; as Pharaoh, who justified God, Exod. ix. 27. And they give some kind of consent to it, but many times it does not continue they have only a pang upon them, that usually dies away after a little time.—*Guide to Christ*, p. 71.

ment, as to many things they used to depend upon, is taken for humiliation: and that is called a submission to God, which is no absolute submission, but has some secret bargain in it, that it is hard to discover.

Secondly, If the operations and effects of the Spirit of God, in the convictions, and comforts of true converts, may be sophisticated, then the order of them may be imitated. If Satan can imitate the things themselves, he may easily put them one after another, in such a certain order. If the devil can make A, B, and C, it is as easy for him to put A first, and B next, and C next, as to range them in a contrary order. The nature of divine things is harder for the devil to imitate, than their order. He cannot *exactly* imitate divine operations in their nature, though his counterfeits may be very much like them in external appearance; but he can exactly imitate their order. When counterfeits are made, there is no divine power needful in order to the placing one of them first, and another last. And therefore no order or method of operations and experiences is any certain sign of their divinity. That only is to be trusted to, as a certain evidence of grace, which Satan cannot do, and which it is impossible should be brought to pass by any power short of divine.

Thirdly, We have no certain rule rule to determine how far God's own Spirit may go in those operations and convictions which in themselves are not spiritual and saving, and yet the person that is the subject of them never be converted, but fall short of salvation at last. There is no necessary connection in the nature of things, between any thing that a natural man may experience while in a state of nature, and the saving grace of God's Spirit. And if there be no connection in the nature of things, then there can be no known and certain connection at all, unless it be by divine revelation. But there is no revealed certain connection between a state of salvation, and any thing that a natural man can be the subject of, before he believes in Christ. God has revealed no certain connection between salvation, and any qualifications in men, but only grace and its fruits. And therefore we do not find any legal convictions, or comforts, following these legal convictions, in any certain method or order, ever once mentioned in the Scripture, as certain signs of grace, or things peculiar to the saints; although we do find gracious operations and effects themselves, so mentioned, thousands of times. Which should be enough with Christians who are willing to have the word of God, rather than their own philosophy, and experiences, and conjectures, as their sufficient and sure guide in things of this nature.

Fourthly, Experience does greatly confirm, that persons seeming to have convictions and comforts following one another in such a method and order, as is frequently observable in true converts, is no certain sign of grace.* I appeal to all those ministers in this land, who have had much occasion of dealing with souls in the late extraordinary season, whether there have not been many who do not prove well, that have given a fair account of their experiences, and have seemed to be converted according to rule, i. e., with convictions and affections, succeeding distinctly and exactly, in that order and method, which has been ordinarily insisted on, as the order of the operations of the Spirit of God in conversion.

And as a seeming to have this distinctness as to steps and method, is no

* Mr. Stoddard, who had much experience of things of this nature, long ago observed, that converted and unconverted men cannot be certainly distinguished by the account they give of their experience; the same relation of experiences being common to both. And that many persons have given a fair account of a work of conversion, that have carried well in the eye of the world for several years, but have not proved well at last.—*Appeal to the Learned*, p. 75, 76.

certain sign that a person is converted; so a being without it, is no evidence that a person is not converted. For though it might be made evident to a demonstration, on Scripture principles, that a sinner cannot be brought heartily to receive Christ as his Saviour, who is not convinced of his sin and misery, and of his own emptiness and helplessness, and his just desert of eternal condemnation; and that therefore such convictions must be some way implied in what is wrought in his soul; yet nothing proves it to be necessary, that all those things which are implied or presupposed in an act of faith in Christ, must be plainly and distinctly wrought in the soul, in so many successive and separate works of the Spirit, that shall be each one plain and manifest, in all who are truly converted. On the contrary (as Mr. Shepard observes), sometimes the change made in a saint, at first work, is like a confused chaos; so that the saints know not what to make of it. The manner of the Spirit's proceeding in them that are born of the Spirit, is very often exceeding mysterious and unsearchable: we, as it were, hear the sound of it, the effect of it is discernible; but no man can tell whence it came, or whither it went. And it is oftentimes as difficult to know the way of the Spirit in the new birth, as in the first birth; Eccl. xi. 5, "Thou knowest not what is the way of the Spirit, or how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child; even so thou knowest not the works of God, that worketh all." The ingenerating of a principle of grace in the soul, seems in Scripture to be compared to the conceiving of Christ in the womb, Gal. iv. 19. And therefore the Church is called Christ's mother, Cant. iii. 11. And so is every particular believer, Matt. xii. 49, 50. And the conception of Christ in the womb of the blessed virgin, by the power of the Holy Ghost, seems to be a designed resemblance of the conception of Christ in the soul of a believer, by the power of the same Holy Ghost. And we know not what is the way of the Spirit, nor how the bones do grow, either in the womb, or heart that conceives this holy child. The new creature may use that language in Psal. cxxxix. 14, 15, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret." Concerning the generation of Christ, both in his person, and also in the hearts of his people, it may be said, as in Isa. liii. 8, "Who can declare his generation?" We know not the works of God, that worketh all. "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing" (Prov. xxv. 2), and to have "his path as it were in the mighty waters, that his footsteps may not be known;" and especially in the works of his Spirit on the hearts of men, which are the highest and chief of his works. And therefore it is said, Isa. xl. 13, "Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him?" It is to be feared that some have gone too far towards directing the Spirit of the Lord, and marking out his footsteps for him, and limiting him to certain steps and methods. Experience plainly shows, that God's Spirit is unsearchable and untraceable, in some of the best of Christians, in the method of his operations, in their conversion. Nor does the Spirit of God proceed discernibly in the steps of a particular established scheme, one half so often as is imagined. A scheme of what is necessary, and according to a rule already received and established by common opinion, has a vast (though to many a very insensible) influence in forming persons' notions of the steps and method of their own experiences. I know very well what their way is; for I have had much opportunity to observe it. Very often, at first, their experiences appear like a confused chaos, as Mr. Shepard expresses it: but then those passages of their experience are picked out, that have most of the appearance of such particular steps that are insisted on; and these are dwelt upon in the thoughts, and these

are told of from time to time, in the relation they give: these parts grow brighter and brighter in their view; and others, being neglected, grow more and more obscure: and what they have experienced is insensibly strained to bring all to an exact conformity to the scheme that is established. And it becomes natural for ministers, who have to deal with them, and direct them that insist upon distinctness and clearness of method, to do so too. But yet there has been so much to be seen of the operations of the Spirit of God, of late, that they who have had much to do with souls, and are not blinded with a seven-fold vail of prejudice, must know that the Spirit is so exceeding various in the manner of his operating, that in many cases it is impossible to trace him, or find out his way.

What we have principally to do with, in our inquiries into our own state, or directions we give to others, is the nature of the effect that God has brought to pass in the soul. As to the steps which the Spirit of God took to bring that effect to pass, we may leave them to him. We are often in Scripture expressly directed to try ourselves by the nature of the fruits of the Spirit; but nowhere by the Spirit's method of producing them.* Many do greatly err in their notions of a clear work of conversion; calling that a clear work, where the successive steps of influence, and method of experience are clear: whereas that indeed is the clearest work (not where the order of *doing* is clearest, but) where the spiritual and divine nature of the work *done*, and effect *wrought*, is most clear.

IX. It is no certain sign that the religious affections which persons have are such as have in them the nature of true religion, or that they have not, that they dispose persons to spend much time in religion, and to be zealously engaged in the external duties of worship.

This has, very unreasonably of late, been looked upon as an argument against the religious affections which some have had, that they spend so much time in reading, praying, singing, hearing sermons, and the like. It is plain from the Scripture, that it is the tendency of true grace to cause persons to delight in such religious exercises. True grace had this effect on Anna the prophetess: Luke ii. 27, "She departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day." And grace had this effect upon the primitive Christians in Jerusalem: Acts ii. 46, 47, "And they continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God." Grace made Daniel delight in the duty of prayer, and solemnly to attend it three times a day, as it also did David: Psal. lv. 17, "Evening, morning, and at noon will I pray." Grace makes the saints delight in singing praises to God: Psal. cxxxv. 3, "Sing praises unto his name, for it is pleasant." And cxlvii. 1, "Praise ye the Lord; for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant, and praise is comely." It also causes them to delight to hear the word of God preached: it makes the gospel a joyful sound to them, Psal. lxxxix. 15, and makes the feet of those who publish these good tidings to be beautiful: Isa. lii. 7, "How

* Mr. Shepard, speaking of the soul's closing with Christ, says, "As a child cannot tell how his soul comes into it, nor it may be when; but afterwards it sees and feels that life; so that he were as bad as a beast, that should deny an immortal soul; so here."—*Parable of the Ten Virgins*, Part II. p. 171.

"If the man do not know the time of his conversion, or first closing with Christ; the minister may not draw any peremptory conclusion from thence, that he is not godly."—*Stoddard's Guide to Christ*, p. 83.

"Do not think there is no compunction, or sense of sin, wrought in the soul, because you cannot so clearly discern and feel it; nor the time of the working, and first beginning of it. I have known many that have come with their complaints, that they *were never humbled, they never felt it so*; yet there it hath been, and many times they have seen it, by the other spectacles, and blessed God for it."—*Shepard's Sound Believer*, page 38. The late impression in Boston.

beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings!" &c. It makes them love God's public worship: Psal. xxvi. 8, "Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honor dwelleth." And xxvii. 4, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple." Psal. lxxxiv. 1, 2, &c., "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord.—Yea, the sparrow hath found a house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. Blessed is the man in whose heart are the ways of them, who passing through the valley of Baca—go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God." Ver. 10, "A day in thy courts is better than a thousand."

This is the nature of true grace. But yet, on the other hand, persons' being disposed to abound and to be zealously engaged in the external exercises of religion, and to spend much time in them, is no sure evidence of grace; because such a disposition is found in many that have no grace. So it was with the Israelites of old, whose services were abominable to God; they attended the "new moons, and Sabbaths, and calling of assemblies, and spread forth their hands, and made many prayers," Isa. i. 12—15. So it was with the Pharisees; they "made long prayers, and fasted twice a week." False religion may cause persons to be loud and earnest in prayer: Isa. lviii. 4, "Ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to cause your voice to be heard on high." That religion which is not spiritual and saving, may cause men to delight in religious duties and ordinances: Isa. lviii. 2, "Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice: they take delight in approaching to God." It may cause them to take delight in hearing the word of God preached, as it was with Ezekiel's hearers: Ezek. xxxiii. 31, 32, "And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness. And lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not." So it was with Herod; he heard John the Baptist gladly, Mark vi. 20. So it was with others of his hearers, "for a season they rejoiced in his light," John v. 35. So the stony ground hearers heard the word with joy.

Experience shows, that persons, from false religion, may be inclined to be exceeding abundant in the external exercises of religion; yea, to give themselves up to them, and devote almost their whole time to them. Formerly a sort of people were very numerous in the Romish church, called *recluses*, who forsook the world, and utterly abandoned the society of mankind, and shut themselves up close in a narrow cell, with a vow never to stir out of it, nor to see the face of any of mankind any more (unless that they might be visited in case of sickness), to spend all their days in the exercise of devotion and converse with God. There were also in old time, great multitudes called Hermits and Anchorites, that left the world to spend all their days in lonesome deserts, to give themselves up to religious contemplations and exercises of devotion; some sorts of them having no dwellings, but the caves and vaults of the mountains, and no food, but the spontaneous productions of the earth. I once lived, for many months, next door to a Jew (the houses adjoining one to another), and had

much opportunity daily to observe him; who appeared to me the devoutest person that I ever saw in my life; great part of his time being spent in acts of devotion, at his eastern window, which opened next to mine, seeming to be most earnestly engaged, not only in the daytime, but sometimes whole nights.

X. Nothing can be certainly known of the nature of religious affections by this, that they much dispose persons with their mouths to praise and glorify God. This indeed is implied in what has been just now observed, of abounding and spending much time in the external exercises of religion, and was also hinted before; but because many seem to look upon it as a bright evidence of gracious affection, when persons appear greatly disposed to praise and magnify God, to have their mouths full of his praises, and affectionately to be calling on others to praise and extol him, I thought it deserved a more particular consideration.

No Christian will make it an argument against a person, that he seems to have such a disposition. Nor can it reasonably be looked upon as an evidence for a person, if those things that have been already observed and proved, be duly considered, viz., that persons, without grace, may have high affections towards God and Christ, and that their affections, being strong, may fill their mouths, and incline them to speak much, and very earnestly, about the things they are affected with, and that there may be counterfeits of all kinds of gracious affection. But it will appear more evidently and directly, that this is no certain sign of grace, if we consider what instances the Scripture gives us of it in those that were graceless. We often have an account of this, in the multitude that were present when Christ preached and wrought miracles; Mark ii. 12, "And immediately he arose, took up his bed, and went forth before them all, insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion." So Matt. ix. 8, and Luke v. 26. Also Matt. xv. 31, "Insomuch that the multitude wondered when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see: and they glorified the God of Israel." So we are told, that on occasion of Christ's raising the son of the widow of Nain, Luke vii. 16, "There came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people." So we read of their glorifying Christ, or speaking exceeding highly of him: Luke iv. 15, "And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all." And how did they praise him, with loud voices, crying, "Hosanna to the Son of David; hosanna in the highest; blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord," a little before he was crucified! And after Christ's ascension, when the apostles had healed the impotent man, we are told, that all men glorified God for that which was done, Acts iv. 21. When the Gentiles in Antioch of Pisidia, heard from Paul and Barnabas, that God would reject the Jews, and take the Gentiles to be his people in their room, they were affected with the goodness of God to the Gentiles, "and glorified the word of the Lord:" but all that did so were not true believers; but only a certain elect number of them; as is intimated in the account we have of it, Acts xiii. 48: "And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed." So of old the children of Israel at the Red Sea, "sang God's praise; but soon forgat his works." And the Jews in Ezekiel's time, "with their mouth showed much love, while their heart went after their covetousness." And it is foretold of false professors, and real enemies of religion, that they should show a forwardness to glorify God: Isa. lxvi. 5, "Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word. Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified."

It is no certain sign that a person is graciously affected, if, in the midst of his hopes and comforts, he is greatly affected with God's unmerited mercy to him that is so unworthy, and seems greatly to extol and magnify free grace. Those that yet remain with unmortified pride and enmity against God, may, when they imagine that they have received extraordinary kindness from God, cry out of their unworthiness, and magnify God's undeserved goodness to them, from no other conviction of their ill deservings, and from no higher principle than Saul had, who, while he yet remained with unsubdued pride and enmity against David, was brought, though a king, to acknowledge his unworthiness, and cry out, "I have played the fool, I have erred exceedingly," and with great affection and admiration, to magnify and extol David's unmerited and unexampled kindness to him, 1 Sam. xxv. 16—19, and xxvi. 21, and from no higher principle than that from whence Nebuchadnezzar was affected with God's dispensations, that he saw and was the subject of, and praises, extols and honors the King of heaven; and both he, and Darius, in their high affections, call upon all nations to praise God, Dan. iii. 28, 29, 30, and iv. 1, 2, 3, 34, 35, 37, and vi. 25, 26, 27.

XI. It is no sign that affections are right, or that they are wrong, that they make persons that have them exceeding confident that what they experience is divine, and that they are in a good estate.

It is an argument with some, against persons, that they are deluded if they pretend to be assured of their good estate, and to be carried beyond all doubting of the favor of God; supposing that there is no such thing to be expected in the church of God, as a full and absolute assurance of hope; unless it be in some very extraordinary circumstances; as in the case of martyrdom; contrary to the doctrine of Protestants, which has been maintained by their most celebrated writers against the Papists; and contrary to the plainest Scripture evidence. It is manifest, that it was a common thing for the saints that we have a history or particular account of in Scripture, to be assured. God, in the plainest and most positive manner, revealed and testified his special favor to Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Daniel, and others. Job often speaks of his sincerity and uprightness with the greatest imaginable confidence and assurance, often calling God to witness to it; and says plainly, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that I shall see him for myself, and not another," Job xix. 25, &c. David, throughout the book of Psalms, almost everywhere speaks without any hesitancy, and in the most positive manner, of God as his God: glorying in him as his portion and heritage, his rock and confidence, his shield, salvation, and high tower, and the like. Hezekiah appeals to God, as one that knew that he had walked before him in truth, and with a perfect heart, 2 Kings xx. 3. Jesus Christ, in his dying discourse with his eleven disciples, in the 14th, 15th, and 16th chapters of John (which was as it were Christ's last will and testament to his disciples, and to his whole church), often declares his special and everlasting love to them in the plainest and most positive terms; and promises them a future participation with him in his glory, in the most absolute manner; and tells them at the same time that he does so, to the end that their joy might be full: John xv. 11, "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." See also at the conclusion of his whole discourse, chap. xvi. 33: "These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." Christ was not afraid of speaking too plainly and positively to them; he did not desire to hold them in the least suspense. And he concluded that last discourse of his

with a prayer in their presence, wherein he speaks positively to his Father of those eleven disciples, as having all of them savingly known him, and believed in him, and received and kept his word; and that they were not of the world; and that for their sakes he sanctified himself; and that his will was, that they should be with him in his glory; and tells his Father, that he spake those things in his prayer, to the end, that his joy might be fulfilled in them, verse 13. By these things it is evident, that it is agreeable to Christ's designs, and the contrived ordering and disposition Christ makes of things in his church, that there should be sufficient and abundant provision made, that his saints might have full assurance of their future glory.

The Apostle Paul, through all his epistles speaks in an assured strain; ever speaking positively of his special relation to Christ, his Lord, and Master, and Redeemer, and his interest in, and expectation of the future reward. It would be endless to take notice of all places that might be enumerated; I shall mention but three or four: Gal. ii. 20, "Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me;" Phil. i. 21, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain;" 2 Tim. i. 12, "I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day;" 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me at that day."

And the nature of the covenant of grace, and God's declared ends in the appointment and constitution of things in that covenant, do plainly show it to be God's design to make ample provision for the saints having an assured hope of eternal life, while living here upon earth. For so are all things ordered and contrived in that covenant, that every thing might be made sure on God's part. "The covenant is ordered in all things and sure:" the promises are most full, and very often repeated, and various ways exhibited; and there are many witnesses, and many seals; and God has confirmed his promises with an oath. And God's declared design in all this, is, that the heirs of the promises might have an undoubting hope and full joy, in an assurance of their future glory. Heb. vi. 17, 18, "Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us." But all this would be in vain, to any such purpose, as the saints' strong consolation, and hope of their obtaining future glory, if their interest in those sure promises in ordinary cases was not ascertainable. For God's promises and oaths, let them be as sure as they will, cannot give strong hope and comfort to any particular person, any further than he can know that those promises are made to him. And in vain is provision made in Jesus Christ, that believers might be perfect as pertaining to the conscience, as is signified, Heb. ix. 9, if assurance of freedom from the guilt of sin is not attainable.

It further appears that assurance is not only attainable in some very extraordinary cases, but that all Christians are directed to give all diligence to make their calling and election sure, and are told how they may do it, 2 Pet. i. 5—8. And it is spoken of as a thing very unbecoming Christians, and an argument of something very blamable in them, not to know whether Christ be in them or no: 2 Cor. xiii. 5, "Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" And it is implied that it is an argument of a very blamable negligence in Christians, if they practise Christianity after such

a manner as to remain uncertain of the reward, in 1 Cor. ix. 26: "I therefore so run, as not uncertainly." And to add no more, it is manifest, that Christians' knowing their interest in the saving benefits of Christianity is a thing ordinarily attainable, because the apostle tells us by what means Christians (and not only the apostles and martyrs) were wont to know this: 1 Cor. ii. 12, "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." And 1 John ii. 3, "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments." And verse 5, "Hereby know we that we are in him." Chap. iii. 14, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren;" ver. 19, "Hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him;" ver. 24, "Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us." So chap. iv. 13, and chap. v. 2, and verse 19.

Therefore it must needs be very unreasonable to determine, that persons are hypocrites, and their affections wrong, because they seem to be out of doubt of their own salvation, and the affections they are the subjects of seem to banish all fears of hell.

On the other hand, it is no sufficient reason to determine that men are saints, and their affections gracious, because the affections they have are attended with an exceeding confidence that their state is good, and their affections divine.* Nothing can be certainly argued from their confidence, how great and strong soever it seems to be. If we see a man that boldly calls God his Father, and commonly speaks in the most bold, familiar, and appropriating language in prayer, "My Father, my dear Redeemer, my sweet Saviour, my Beloved," and the like; and it is a common thing for him to use the most confident expressions before men, about the goodness of his state; such as, "I know certainly that God is my Father; I know so surely as there is a God in heaven, that he is my God; I know I shall go to heaven, as well as if I were there; I know that God is now manifesting himself to my soul, and is now smiling upon me;" and seems to have done for ever with any inquiry or examination into his state, as a thing sufficiently known, and out of doubt, and to contemn all that so much as intimate or suggest that there is some reason to doubt or fear whether all is right; such things are no signs at all that it is indeed so as he is confident it is.† Such an overbearing, high-handed, and violent sort of confidence as this, so affecting to declare itself with a most glaring show in the sight of men, which is to be seen in many, has not the countenance of a true Christian assurance: it savors

* "O professor, look carefully to your foundation: 'Be not high minded, but fear.' You have, it may be, done and suffered many things in and for religion; you have excellent gifts and sweet comforts; a warm zeal for God, and high confidence of your integrity: all this may be right, for aught that I, or (it may be) you know; but yet, it is possible it may be false. You have sometimes judged yourselves, and pronounced yourselves upright; but remember your final sentence is not yet pronounced by your Judge. And what if God weigh you over again, in his more equal balance, and should say, *Mene Tekel*, 'Thou art weighed in the balance, and art found wanting?' What a confounded man wilt thou be, under such a sentence! *Quæ splendent in conspectu hominis, sordent in conspectu judicis;* things that are highly esteemed of men, are an abomination in the sight of God: He seeth not as man seeth. Thy heart may be false, and thou not know it: yea, it may be false, and thou strongly confident of its integrity."—*Flavel's Touchstone of Sincerity*, chap. ii. sect. 5.

"Some hypocrites are a great deal more confident than many saints."—*Stoddard's Discourse on the Way to know Sincerity and Hypocrisy*, p. 128.

† "Doth the work of faith, in some believers, bear upon its top branches the full ripe fruits of a blessed assurance? Lo, what strong confidence, and high built persuasions, of an interest in God, have sometimes been found in unsanctified ones! Yea, so strong may this false assurance be, that they dare boldly venture to go to the judgment seat of God, and there defend it. Doth the Spirit of God fill the heart of the assured believer with joy unspeakable, and full of glory, giving him, through faith, a prelibation or foretaste of heaven itself, in those first fruits of it? How near to this comes what the Apostle supposes may be found in apostates!"—*Flavel's Husbandry Spiritualized*, chap. xii.

more of the spirit of the Pharisees, who never doubted but that they were saints, and the most eminent of saints, and were bold to go to God, and come up near to him, and lift up their eyes, and thank him for the great distinction he had made between them and other men; and when Christ intimated that they were blind and graceless, despised the suggestion: John ix. 40, "And some of the Pharisees which were with him, heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also?" If they had more of the spirit of the publican, with their confidence, who, in a sense of his exceeding unworthiness, stood afar off, and durst not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven, but smote on his breast, and cried out of himself as a sinner, their confidence would have more of the aspect of the confidence of one that humbly trusts and hopes in Christ, and has no confidence in himself.

If we do but consider what the hearts of natural men are, what principles they are under the dominion of, what blindness and deceit, what self-flattery, self-exaltation, and self-confidence reign there, we need not at all wonder that their high opinion of themselves, and confidence of their happy circumstances, be as high and strong as mountains, and as violent as a tempest, when once conscience is blinded, and convictions killed, with false high affections, and those forementioned principles let loose, fed up and prompted by false joys and comforts, excited by some pleasing imaginations, impressed by Satan, transforming himself into an angel of light.

When once a hypocrite is thus established in a false hope, he has not those things to cause him to call his hope in question, that oftentimes are the occasion of the doubting of true saints; as, *first*, he has not that cautious spirit, that great sense of the vast importance of a sure foundation, and that dread of being deceived. The comforts of the true saints increase awakening and caution, and a lively sense how great a thing it is to appear before an infinitely holy, just and omniscient Judge. But false comforts put an end to these things and dreadfully stupify the mind. *Secondly*, The hypocrite has not the knowledge of his own blindness, and the deceitfulness of his own heart, and that mean opinion of his own understanding, that the true saint has. Those that are deluded with false discoveries and affections, are evermore highly conceited of their light and understanding. *Thirdly*, The devil does not assault the hope of the hypocrite, as he does the hope of a true saint. The devil is a great enemy to a true Christian hope, not only because it tends greatly to the comfort of him that hath it, but also because it is a thing of a holy, heavenly nature, greatly tending to promote and cherish grace in the heart, and a great incentive to strictness and diligence in the Christian life. But he is no enemy to the hope of a hypocrite, which above all things establishes his interest in him that has it. A hypocrite may retain his hope without opposition, as long as he lives, the devil never disturbing it, nor attempting to disturb it. But there is perhaps no true Christian but what has his hope assaulted by him. Satan assaulted Christ himself upon this, whether he were the Son of God or no: and the servant is not above his Master, nor the disciple above his Lord; it is enough for the disciple, that is most privileged in this world, to be as his Master. *Fourthly*, He who has a false hope, has not that sight of his own corruptions, which the saint has. A true Christian has ten times so much to do with his heart and its corruptions, as a hypocrite: and the sins of his heart and practice, appear to him in their blackness; they look dreadful; and it often appears a very mysterious thing, that any grace can be consistent with such corruption, or should be in such a heart. But a false hope hides corruption, covers it all over, and the hypocrite looks clean and bright in his own eyes.

There are two sorts of hypocrites: one that are deceived with their outward morality and external religion; many of whom are professed Arminians, in the doctrine of justification: and the other, are those that are deceived with false discoveries and elevations; who often cry down works, and men's own righteousness, and talk much of free grace; but at the same time make a righteousness of their discoveries and of their humiliation, and exalt themselves to heaven with them. These two kinds of hypocrites, Mr. Shepard, in his exposition of the Parable of the Ten Virgins, distinguishes by the name of *legal* and *evangelical* hypocrites; and often speaks of the latter as the worst. And it is evident that the latter are commonly by far the most confident in their hope, and with the most difficulty brought off from it: I have scarcely known the instance of such a one, in my life, that has been undeceived. The chief grounds of the confidence of many of them, are the very same kind of impulses and supposed revelations (sometimes with texts of Scripture, and sometimes without) that so many of late have had concerning future events; calling these impulses about their good estate, the witness of the Spirit; entirely misunderstanding the nature of the witness of the Spirit, as I shall show hereafter. Those that have had visions and impulses about other things, it has generally been to reveal such things as they are desirous and fond of: and no wonder that persons who give heed to such things, have the same sort of visions or impressions about their own eternal salvation, to reveal to them that their sins are forgiven them, that their names are written in the book of life, that they are in high favor with God, &c., and especially when they earnestly seek, expect, and wait for evidence of their election and salvation this way, as the surest and most glorious evidence of it. Neither is it any wonder, that when they have such a supposed revelation of their good estate, it raises in them the highest degree of confidence of it. It is found by abundant experience, that those who are led away by impulses and imagined revelations, are extremely confident: they suppose that the great Jehovah has declared these and those things to them; and having his immediate testimony, a strong confidence is the highest virtue. Hence they are bold to say, I know this or that—I know certainly—I am as sure as that I have a being, and the like; and they despise all argument and inquiry in the case. And above all things else, it is easy to be accounted for, that impressions and impulses about that which is so pleasing, so suiting their self-love and pride, as their being the dear children of God, distinguished from most in the world in his favor, should make them strongly confident; especially when with their impulses and revelations they have high affections, which they take to be the most eminent exercises of grace. I have known of several persons, that have had a fond desire of something of a temporal nature, through a violent passion that has possessed them; and they have been earnestly pursuing the thing they have desired should come to pass, and have met with great difficulty and many discouragements in it, but at last have had an impression, or supposed revelation, that they should obtain what they sought; and they have looked upon it as a sure promise from the Most High, which has made them most ridiculously confident, against all manner of reason to convince them to the contrary, and all events working against them. And there is nothing hinders, but that persons who are seeking their salvation, may be deceived by the like delusive impressions, and be made confident of that, the same way.

The confidence of many of this sort of hypocrites, that Mr. Shepard calls *evangelical hypocrites*, is like the confidence of some mad men, who think they are kings; they will maintain it against all manner of reason and evidence. And in one sense, it is much more immovable than a truly gracious assurance;

a true assurance is not upheld, but by the soul's being kept in a holy frame, and grace maintained in lively exercise. If the actings of grace do much decay in the Christian, and he falls into a lifeless frame, he loses his assurance: but this kind of confidence of hypocrites will not be shaken by sin; they (at least some of them) will maintain their boldness in their hope, in the most corrupt frames and wicked ways; which is a sure evidence of their delusion.*

And here I cannot but observe, that there are certain doctrines often preached to the people, which need to be delivered with more caution and explanation than they frequently are; for, as they are by many understood, they tend greatly to establish this delusion and false confidence of hypocrites. The doctrines I speak of are those of "Christians living by faith, not by sight; their giving glory to God, by trusting him in the dark; living upon Christ, and not upon experiences; not making their good frames the foundation of their faith:" which are excellent and important doctrines indeed, rightly understood, but corrupt and destructive, as many understand them. The Scripture speaks of living or walking by faith, and not by sight, in no other way than these, viz., a being governed by a respect to eternal things, that are the objects of faith, and are not seen, and not by a respect to temporal things, which are seen; and believing things revealed, that we never saw with bodily eyes; and also living by faith in the promise of future things, without yet seeing or enjoying the things promised, or knowing the way how they can be fulfilled. This will be easily evident to any one who looks over the Scriptures, which speak of *faith* in opposition to *sight;* as 2 Cor. iv. 18, and v. 7, Heb. xi. 1, 8, 13, 17, 27, 29, Rom. viii. 24, John xx. 29. But this doctrine, as it is understood by many, is, that Christians ought firmly to believe and trust in Christ, without spiritual sight or light, and although they are in a dark dead frame, and, for the present, have no spiritual experiences or discoveries. And it is truly the duty of those who are thus in darkness, to come out of darkness into light and believe. But that they should confidently believe and trust, while they yet remain without spiritual light or sight, is an anti-scriptural and absurd doctrine. The Scripture is ignorant of any such faith in Christ of the operation of God, that is not founded in a spiritual sight of Christ. That believing on Christ, which accompanies a title to everlasting life, is a "seeing the Son, and believing on him," John vi. 40. True faith in Christ is never exercised, any further than persons "behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord, and have the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," 2 Cor. iii. 18, and iv. 6. They into whose minds "the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, does not shine, believe not," 2 Cor. iv. 5. That faith, which is without spiritual light, is not the faith of the children of the light, and of the day; but the presumption of the children of darkness. And therefore to press and urge them to believe, without any spiritual light or sight, tends greatly to help forward the delusions of the prince of darkness. Men not only cannot exercise faith without some spiritual light, but they can exercise faith only just in such proportion as they have spiritual light. Men will trust in God no further than they know him; and they cannot be in the exercise of faith in him one ace further than they have a sight of his fulness

* Mr. Shepard speaks of it, as a "presumptuous peace, that is not interrupted and broke by evil works." And says, that "the spirit will sigh, and not sing in that bosom, whence corrupt dispositions and passions break out." And that "though men in such frames may seem to maintain the consolation of the Spirit, and not suspect their hypocrisy, under pretence of trusting the Lord's mercy; yet they cannot avoid the condemnation of the world." *Parable of the Ten Virgins*, Part I. p. 139.

Dr. Ames speaks of it as a thing, by which the peace of a wicked man may be distinguished from the peace of a godly man, "that the peace of a wicked man continues, whether he performs the duties of piety and righteousness or no; provided those crimes are avoided that appear horrid to nature itself." *Cases of Conscience*, Lib. III. Chap. vii.

and faithfulness in exercise. Nor can they have the exercise of trust in God, any further than they are in a gracious frame. They that are in a dead carnal frame, doubtless ought to trust in God; because that would be the same thing as coming out of their bad frame, and turning to God; but to exhort men confidently to trust in God, and so hold up their hope and peace, though they are not in a gracious frame, and continue still to be so, is the same thing in effect, as to exhort them confidentially to trust in God, but not with a gracious trust: and what is that but a wicked presumption? It is just as impossible for men to have a strong or lively trust in God, when they have no lively exercises of grace, or sensible Christian experiences, as it is for them to be in the lively exercises of grace, without the exercises of grace.

It is true, that it is the duty of God's people to trust in him when in darkness, and though they remain still in darkness, in that sense, that they ought to trust in God when the aspects of his providence are dark, and look as though God had forsaken them, and did not hear their prayers, and many clouds gather, and many enemies surround them, with a formidable aspect, threatening to swallow them up, and all events of providence seem to be against them, all circumstances seem to render the promises of God difficult to be fulfilled, and God must be trusted out of sight, i. e., when we cannot see which way it is possible for him to fulfil his word; every thing but God's mere word makes it look unlikely, so that if persons believe, they must hope against hope. Thus the ancient Patriarchs, and Job, and the Psalmist, and Jeremiah, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego, and the Apostle Paul, gave glory to God by trusting in God in darkness. And we have many instances of such a glorious victorious faith in the eleventh of Hebrews. But how different a thing is this, from trusting in God, without spiritual sight, and being at the same time in a dead and carnal frame!

There is also such a thing as spiritual light's being let into the soul in one way, when it is not in another; and so there is such a thing as the saints trusting in God, and also knowing their good estate, when they are destitute of some kinds of experience. As for instance, they may have clear views of God's sufficiency and faithfulness, and so confidently trust in him, and know that they are his children; and at the same time, not have those clear and sweet ideas of his love as at other times: for it was thus with Christ himself in his last passion. And they may have views of much of God's sovereignty, holiness, and all sufficiency, enabling them quietly to submit to him, and exercise a sweet and most encouraging hope in God's fulness, when they are not satisfied of their own good estate. But how different things are these, from confidently trusting in God, without spiritual light or experience!

Those that thus insist on persons living by faith, when they have no experience, and are in very bad frames, are also very absurd in their notions of faith. What they mean by faith is, believing that they are in a good estate. Hence they count it a dreadful sin for them to doubt of their state, whatever frames they are in, and whatever wicked things they do, because it is the great and heinous sin of unbelief; and he is the best man, and puts most honor upon God, that maintains his hope of his good estate the most confidently and immovably, when he has the least light or experience; that is to say, when he is in the worst and most wicked frame and way; because, forsooth, that is a sign that he is strong in faith, giving glory to God, and against hope believes in hope. But what Bible do they learn this notion of faith out of, that it is a man's confidently believing that he is in a good estate?* If this be faith, the Pharisees had

* "Men do not know that they are godly by believing that they are godly. We know many things

faith in an eminent degree; some of which, Christ teaches, committed the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost. The Scripture represents faith as that by which men are brought into a good estate; and therefore it cannot be the same thing as believing that they are already in a good estate. To suppose that faith consists in persons believing that they are in a good estate, is in effect the same thing, as to suppose that faith consists in a person's believing that he has faith, or believing that he believes.

Indeed persons doubting of their good estate, may in several respects arise from unbelief. It may be from unbelief, or because they have so little faith that they have so little evidence of their good estate: if they had more experience of the actings of faith, and so more experience of the exercise of grace, they would have clearer evidence that their state was good; and so their doubts would be removed. And then their doubting of their state may be from unbelief thus, when, though there be many things that are good evidences of a work of grace in them, yet they doubt very much whether they are really in a state of favor with God, because it is they, those that are so unworthy, and have done so much to provoke God to anger against them. Their doubts in such a case arise from unbelief, as they arise from want of a sufficient sense of, and reliance on, the infinite riches of God's grace, and the sufficiency of Christ for the chief of sinners. They may also be from unbelief, when they doubt of their state, because of the mystery of God's dealings with them; they are not able to reconcile such dispensations with God's favor to them; or when they doubt whether they have any interest in the promises, because the promises from the aspect of providence appear so unlikely to be fulfilled; the difficulties that are in the way are so many and great. Such doubting arises from want of dependence upon God's almighty power, and his knowledge and wisdom, as infinitely above theirs. But yet, in such persons, their unbelief, and their doubting of their state, are not the same thing; though one arises from the other.

Persons may be greatly to blame for doubting of their state, on such grounds as these last mentioned; and they may be to blame, that they have no more grace, and no more of the present exercises and experiences of it, to be an evidence to them of the goodness of their state: men are doubtless to blame for being in a dead, carnal frame; but when they are in such a frame, and have no sensible experience of the exercises of grace, but on the contrary, are much under the prevalence of their lusts and an unchristian spirit, they are not to blame for doubting of their state. It is as impossible, in the nature of things, that a holy and Christian hope should be kept alive, in its clearness and strength, in such circumstances, as it is to keep the light in the room, when the candle is put out; or to maintain the bright sunshine in the air, when the sun is gone down. Distant experiences, when darkened by present prevailing lust and corruption, never keep alive a gracious confidence and assurance; but that sickens and decays upon it, as necessarily as a little child by repeated blows on the head with a hammer. Nor is it at all to be lamented, that persons doubt of their state in such circumstances: but, on the contrary, it is desirable and every way best that they should. It is agreeable to that wise and merciful constitu-

by faith, Heb. xi. 3. 'By faith we understand that the worlds were made by the word of God.' Faith is the evidence of things not seen, Heb. xi. 1. Thus men know the Trinity of persons of the Godhead; that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; that he that believes in him will have eternal life; the resurrection of the dead. And if God should tell a saint that he hath grace, he might know it by believing the word of God. But it is not this way, that godly men do know that they have grace. It is not revealed in the word, and the Spirit of God doth not testify it to particular persons." *Stoddard's Nature of Saving Conversion*, p. 83, 84.

tion of things, which God hath established, that it should be so. For so hath God contrived and constituted things, in his dispensations towards his own people, that when their love decays, and the exercises of it fail, or become weak, fear should arise; for then they need it to restrain them from sin, and to excite them to care for the good of their souls, and so to stir them up to watchfulness and diligence in religion: but God hath so ordered, that when love rises, and is in vigorous exercise, then fear should vanish, and be driven away; for then they need it not, having a higher and more excellent principle in exercise, to restrain them from sin, and stir them up to their duty. There are no other principles, which human nature is under the influence of, that will ever make men conscientious, but one of these two, *fear* or *love;* and therefore, if one of these should not prevail as the other decays, God's people, when fallen into dead and carnal frames, when love is asleep, would be lamentably exposed indeed: and therefore God has wisely ordained, that these two opposite principles of love and fear should rise and fall, like the two opposite scales of a balance; when one rises the other sinks. As light and darkness necessarily and unavoidably succeed each other; if light prevails, so much does darkness cease, and no more; and if light decays, so much does darkness prevail; so it is in the heart of a child of God: if divine love decays and falls asleep, and lust prevails, the light and joy of hope go out, and dark fear and doubting arises; and if, on the contrary, divine love prevails and comes into lively exercise, this brings in the brightness of hope, and drives away black lust, and fear with it. Love is the spirit of adoption, or the childlike principle; if that slumbers, men fall under fear, which is the spirit of bondage, or the servile principle; and so on the contrary. And if it be so, that love, or the spirit of adoption, be carried to a great height, it quite drives away all fear, and gives full assurance; agreeable to that of the apostle, 1 John iv. 18, "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear." These two opposite principles of lust and holy love, bring hope and fear into the hearts of God's children, in proportion as they prevail; that is, when left to their own natural influence, without something adventitious, or accidental intervening; as the distemper of melancholy, doctrinal ignorance, prejudices of education, wrong instruction, false principles, peculiar temptations, &c.

Fear is cast out by the Spirit of God, no other way than by the prevailing of love; nor is it ever maintained by his Spirit but when love is asleep. At such a time, in vain is all the saint's self-examinations, and poring on past experience, in order to establish his peace, and get assurance. For it is contrary to the nature of things, as God hath constituted them, that he should have assurance at such a time.

They therefore do directly thwart God's wise and gracious constitution of things, who exhort others to be confident in their hope, when in dead frames; under a notion of "living by faith, and not by sight, and trusting God in the dark, and living upon Christ, and not upon experiences;" and warn them not to doubt of their good estate, lest they should be guilty of the dreadful sin of unbelief. And it has a direct tendency to establish the most presumptuous hypocrites, and to prevent their ever calling their state in question, how much soever wickedness rages, and reigns in their hearts, and prevails in their lives; under a notion of honoring God, by hoping against hope, and confidently trusting in God, when things look very dark. And doubtless vast has been the mischief that has been done this way.

Persons cannot be said to forsake Christ, and live on their experiences of the exercises of grace, merely because they take them and use them as evidences of grace; for there are no other evidences that they can or ought to take

But then may persons be said to live upon their experiences, when they make a righteousness of them, and instead of keeping their eye on God's glory and Christ's excellency, they turn their eyes off these objects without them, on to themselves, to entertain their minds, by viewing their own attainments, and high experiences, and the great things they have met with, and are bright and beautiful in their own eyes, and are rich and increased with goods in their own apprehensions, and think that God has as admiring an esteem of them, on the same account, as they have of themselves: this is living on experiences, and not on Christ; and is more abominable in the sight of God, than the gross immoralities of those who make no pretences to religion. But this is a far different thing from a mere improving experiences as evidences of an interest in a glorious Redeemer.

But to return from this digression, I would mention one thing more under the general head that I am upon.

XII. Nothing can be certainly concluded concerning the nature of religious affections, that any are the subjects of, from this, that the outward manifestations of them, and the relation persons give of them, are very affecting and pleasing to the truly godly, and such as greatly gain their charity, and win their hearts.

The true saints have not such a spirit of discerning that they can certainly determine who are godly, and who are not. For though they know experimentally what true religion is, in the internal exercises of it; yet these are what they can neither feel, nor see, in the heart of another.* There is nothing in others, that comes within their view, but outward manifestations and appearances; but the Scripture plainly intimates, that this way of judging what is in men by outward appearances, is at best uncertain, and liable to deceit: 1 Sam. xvi. 7, "The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." Isa. xi. 3, "He shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears."† They commonly are but poor judges, and dangerous counsellors in soul cases, who are quick and peremptory in determining persons' states, vaunting themselves in their extraordinary faculty of discerning and distinguishing, in these great affairs; as though all was open and clear to them. They betray one of these three things: either that they have had but little experience; or are persons of a weak judgment; or that they have a great degree of pride and self-confidence, and so ignorance of themselves. Wise and experienced men will proceed with great caution in such an affair.

When there are many probable appearances of piety in others, it is the duty of the saints to receive them cordially into their charity, and to love them and rejoice in them, as their brethren in Christ Jesus. But yet the best of men may be deceived, when the appearances seem to them exceeding fair and bright, even so as entirely to gain their charity, and conquer their hearts. It has been a common thing in the church of God, for such bright professors, that are re-

* Men may have the knowledge of their own conversion: the knowledge that other men have of it is uncertain, because no man can look into the heart of another and see the workings of grace there." *Stoddard's Nature of Saving Conversion*, chap. xv. at the beginning.

† Mr. Stoddard observes, that "all visible signs are common to converted and unconverted men; and a relation of experiences, among the rest." *Appeal to the Learned*, p. 75.

"O how hard it is for the eye of man to discern betwixt chaff and wheat! And how many upright hearts are now censured, whom God will clear! How many false hearts are now approved whom God will condemn! Men ordinarily have no convictive proofs, but only probable symptoms; which at most beget but a conjectural knowledge of another's state. And they that shall peremptorily judge either way, may possibly wrong the generation of the upright, or on the other side, absolve and justify the wicked. And truly, considering what has been said, it is no wonder that dangerous mistakes are so frequently made in this matter." *Flavel's Husbandry Spiritualized*, chap. xii.

ceived as eminent saints, among the saints, to fall away and come to nothing.* And this we need not wonder at, if we consider the things that have been already observed; what things it has been shown may appear in men who are altogether graceless. Nothing hinders but that all these things may meet together in men, and yet they be without a spark of grace in their hearts. They may have religious affections of many kinds together; they may have a sort of affection towards God, that bears a great resemblance of dear love to him; and so a kind of love to the brethren, and great appearances of admiration of God's perfections and works, and sorrow for sin, and reverence, submission, self-abasement, gratitude, joy, religious longings, and zeal for religion and the good of souls. And these affections may come after great awakenings and convictions of conscience; and there may be great appearances of a work of humiliation: and counterfeit love and joy, and other affections may seem to follow these, and one another, just in the same order that is commonly observable in the holy affections of true converts. And these religious affections may be carried to a great height, and may cause abundance of tears, yea, may overcome the nature of those who are the subjects of them, and may make them affectionate, and fervent, and fluent, in speaking of the things of God, and dispose them to be abundant in it; and may be attended with many sweet texts of Scripture, and precious promises, brought with great impression on their minds; and may dispose them with their mouths to praise and glorify God, in a very ardent manner, and fervently to call upon others to praise him, crying out of their unworthiness, and extolling free grace. And may, moreover, dispose them to abound in the external duties of religion, such as prayer, hearing the word preached, singing, and religious conference; and these things attended with a great resemblance of a Christian assurance, in its greatest height, when the saints mount on eagles' wings, above all darkness and doubting. I think it has been made plain, that there may be all these things, and yet there be nothing more than the common influences of the Spirit of God, joined with the delusions of Satan, and the wicked and deceitful heart.—To which I may add, that all these things may be attended with a sweet natural temper, and a good doctrinal knowledge of religion, and a long acquaintance with the saints' way of talking, and of expressing their affections and experiences, and a natural ability and subtilty in accommodating their expressions and manner of speaking to the dispositions and notions of the hearers, and a taking decency of expression and behavior, formed by a good education. How great therefore may the resemblance be, as to all outward expressions and appearances, between a hypocrite and a true saint! Doubtless it is the glorious prerogative of the omniscient God, as the great searcher of hearts, to be able well to separate between sheep and goats. And what an indecent self-exaltation and arrogance it is, in poor, fallible, dark mortals, to pretend that they can determine and know, who are really sincere and upright before God, and who are not!

Many seem to lay great weight on that, and to suppose it to be what may

* "Be not offended, if you see great cedars fall, stars fall from heaven, great professors die and decay: do not think they be all such: do not think that the elect shall fall. Truly, some are such that when they fall, one would think a man truly sanctified might fall away, as the Arminians think: 1 John ii. 19, *They were not of us.* I speak this, because the Lord is shaking; and I look for great apostasies: for God is trying all his friends, through all the Christian world. In Germany what profession was there! Who would have thought it? The Lord, who delights to manifest that openly, which was hid secretly, sends a sword and they fall." *Shepard's Parab.* Part I. p. 118, 119.

"The saints may approve thee and God condemn thee. Rev. iii. 1, "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead" Men may say, There is a true Nathanael; and God may say, There is a self-cozening Pharisee. Reader, thou hast heard of Judas and Demas, of Ananias and Sapphira, of Hymeneus and Philetus, once renowned and famous professors, and thou hast heard how they proved at last." *Flavel's Touchstone of Sincerity*, Chap. ii. Sect. 5.

determine them with respect to others' real piety, when they not only tell a plausible story, but when, in giving an account of their experiences, they make such a representation, and speak after such a manner, that they feel their talk; that is to say, when their talk seems to harmonize with their own experience, and their hearts are touched and affected and delighted, by what they hear them say, and drawn out by it, in dear love to them. But there is not that certainty in such things, and that full dependence to be had upon them, which many imagine. A true saint greatly delights in holiness; it is a most beautiful thing in his eyes; and God's work, in savingly renewing and making holy and happy, a poor, and before perishing soul, appears to him a most glorious work: no wonder, therefore, that his heart is touched, and greatly affected, when he hears another give a probable account of this work, wrought on his own heart, and when he sees in him probable appearances of holiness; whether those pleasing appearances have any thing real to answer them, or no. And if he uses the same words, which are commonly made use of, to express the affections of true saints, and tells of many things following one another in an order, agreeable to the method of the experience of him that hears him, and also speaks freely and boldly, and with an air of assurance; no wonder the other thinks his experiences harmonize with his own. And if, besides all this, in giving his relation, he speaks with much affection; and, above all, if in speaking he seems to show much affection to him to whom he speaks, such an affection as the Galatians did to the Apostle Paul; these things will naturally have a powerful influence, to affect and draw his hearer's heart, and open wide the doors of his charity towards him. David speaks as one who had felt Ahithophel's talk, and had once a sweet savor and relish of it. And therefore exceeding great was his surprise and disappointment, when he fell; it was almost too much for him: Psal. lv. 12, 13, 14, "It was not an enemy—then I could have borne it; but it was thou, a man, mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance: we took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company."

It is with professors of religion, especially such as become so in a time of outpouring of the Spirit of God, as it is with blossoms in the spring;* there are vast numbers of them upon the trees, which all look fair and promising; but yet many of them never come to any thing. And many of those, that in a little time wither up, and drop off, and rot under the trees; yet for a while look as beautiful and gay as others; and not only so, but smell sweet, and send forth a pleasant odor; so that we cannot, by any of our senses, certainly distinguish those blossoms which have in them that secret virtue, which will afterwards appear in the fruit, and that inward solidity and strength which shall enable them to bear, and cause them to be perfected by the hot summer sun, that will dry up the others. It is the mature fruit which comes afterwards, and not the beautiful colors and smell of the blossoms, that we must judge by. So new converts (professedly so), in their talk about things of religion, may appear fair, and be very savory, and the saints may think they talk feelingly. They may relish their talk, and imagine they perceive a divine savor in it, and yet all may come to nothing.

It is strange how hardly men are brought to be contented with the rules and directions Christ has given them, but they must needs go by other rules of their own inventing, that seem to them wiser and better. I know of no directions or counsels which Christ ever delivered more plainly, than the rules he has given

* A time of outpouring of the Spirit of God, reviving religion, and producing the pleasant appearances of it, in new converts, is in Scripture compared to this very thing, viz., the spring season, when the benign influences of the heavens cause the blossoms to put forth. Cant. ii. 11, 12.

us, to guide us in our judging of others' sincerity, viz., that we should judge of the tree chiefly by the fruit: but yet this will not do; but other ways are found out, which are imagined to be more distinguishing and certain. And woful have been the mischievous consequences of this arrogant setting up men's wisdom above the wisdom of Christ. I believe many saints have gone much out of the way of Christ's word, in this respect: and some of them have been chastised with whips, and (I had almost said) scorpions, to bring them back again. But many things which have lately appeared, and do now appear, may convince, that ordinarily those who have gone farthest this way, that have been most highly conceited of their faculty of discerning, and have appeared most forward, peremptorily and suddenly to determine the state of men's souls, have been hypocrites, who have known nothing of true religion.

In the parable of the wheat and tares, it is said, Matt. xiii. 26, "When the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also." As though the tares were not discerned, nor distinguishable from the wheat, until then, as Mr. Flavel observes,* who mentions it as an observation of Jerome's, that "wheat and tares are so much alike, until the blade of the wheat comes to bring forth the ear, that it is next to impossible to distinguish them." And then Mr. Flavel adds, "How difficult soever it be to discern the difference between wheat and tares; yet doubtless the eye of sense can much easier discriminate them, than the most quick and piercing eye of man can discern the difference between special and common grace. For all saving graces in the saints, have their counterfeits in hypocrites; there are similar works in those, which a spiritual and very judicious eye may easily mistake for the saving and genuine effects of a sanctifying spirit."

As it is the ear or the fruit which distinguishes the wheat from the tares, so this is the true Shibboleth, that he who stands as judge at the passages of Jordan, makes use of to distinguish those that shall pass over Jordan into the true Canaan, from those that should be slain at the passages. For the Hebrew word Shibboleth signifies an ear of corn. And perhaps the more full pronunciation of Jephthah's friends, Shibboleth, may represent a full ear with fruit in it, typifying the fruits of the friends of Christ, the antitype of Jephthah; and the more lean pronunciation of the Ephraimites, his enemies, may represent their empty ears, typifying the show of religion in hypocrites, without substance and fruit. This is agreeable to the doctrine we are abundantly taught in Scripture, viz., that he who is set to judge those that pass through death, whether they have a right to enter into the heavenly Canaan or no, or whether they should not be slain, will judge every man according to his works.

We seem to be taught the same things, by the rules given for the priest's discerning the leprosy. In many cases it was impossible for the priest to determine whether a man had the leprosy, or whether he were clean, by the most narrow inspection of the appearances that were upon him, until he had waited to see what the appearances would come to, and had shut up the person who showed himself to him, one seven days after another; and when he judged, he was to determine by the hair, which grew out of the spot that was showed him, which was as it were the fruit that it brought forth.

And here, before I finish what I have to say under this head, I would say something to a strange notion some have of late been led away with, of certainly knowing the good estate that others are in, as though it were immediately revealed to them from heaven, by their love flowing out to them in an

* Husbandry Spiritualized, Chap. xii

extraordinary manner. They argue thus, that their love being very sensible and great, it may be certainly known by them who feel it, to be a true Christian love: and if it be a true Christian love, the Spirit of God must be the author of it: and inasmuch as the Spirit of God who knows certainly, whether others are the children of God or no, and is a spirit of truth, is pleased by an uncommon influence upon them, to cause their love to flow out, in an extraordinary manner, towards such a person as a child of God; it must needs be, that this infallible Spirit, who deceives none, knows that that person is a child of God. But such persons might be convinced of the falseness of their reasoning, if they would consider whether or no it be not their duty, and what God requires of them, to love those as the children of God who they think are the children of God, and whom they have no reason to think otherwise of, from all that they can see in them, though God, who searches the hearts, knows them not to be his children.

If it be their duty, then it is good, and the want of it sin; and therefore surely the Spirit of God may be the author of it: the Spirit of God, without being a spirit of falsehood, may in such a case assist a person to do his duty, and keep him from sin. But then they argue from the uncommon degree and special manner, in which their love flows out to the person, which they think the Spirit of God never would cause, if he did not know the object to be a child of God. But then I would ask them, whether or no it is not their duty to love all such as they are bound to think are the children of God, from all that they can see in them, to a very great degree, though God, from other things which he sees, that are out of sight to them, knows them not to be so. It is men's duty to love all whom they are bound in charity to look upon as the children of God, with a vastly dearer affection than they commonly do. As we ought to love Christ to the utmost capacity of our nature, so it is our duty to love those who we think are so near and dear to him as his members, with an exceeding dear affection, as Christ has loved us; and therefore it is sin in us not to love them so. We ought to pray to God that he would by his Spirit keep us from sin, and enable us to do our duty: and may not his Spirit answer our prayers, and enable us to do our duty, in a particular instance, without lying? If he cannot, then the Spirit of God is bound not to help his people to do their duty in some instances, because he cannot do it without being a spirit of falsehood. But surely God is so sovereign as that comes to, that he may enable us to do our duty when he pleases, and on what occasion he pleases. When persons think others are his children, God may have other ends in causing their exceedingly endeared love to flow out to them, besides revealing to them whether their opinion of them be right or no: he may have that merciful end in it, to enable them to know their duty, and to keep them from that dreadful infinite evil, sin. And will they say God shall not show them that mercy in such a case? If I am at a distance from home, and hear, that in my absence my house is burnt, but my family have, in some extraordinary manner, all escaped the flames; and every thing in the circumstances of the story, as I hear it, makes it appear very credible, it would be sin in me, in such a case, not to feel a very great degree of gratitude to God, though the story indeed be not true. And is not God so sovereign, that he may, if he pleases, show me that mercy on that occasion, and enable me to do my duty in a much further degree than I used to do it, and yet not incur the charge of deceitfulness in confirming a falsehood?

It is exceeding manifest, that error or mistake may be the occasion of a gracious exercise, and consequently a gracious influence of the Spirit of God, by Rom. xiv. 6: "He that eateth to the Lord he eateth, and giveth God

thanks; and he that eateth not to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks!" The apostle is speaking of those, who through erroneous and needless scruples, avoided eating legally unclean meats.—By this it is very evident, that there may be true exercises of grace, a true respect to the Lord, and particularly, a true thankfulness, which may be occasioned, both by an erroneous judgment and practice. And consequently, an error may be the occasion of those true holy exercises that are from the infallible Spirit of God. And if so, it is certainly too much for us to determine, to how great a degree the Spirit of God may give this holy exercise, on such an occasion.

This notion, of certainly discerning another's state, by love flowing out, is not only not founded on reason or Scripture, but it is anti-scriptural, it is against the rules of Scripture; which say not a word of any such way of judging the state of others as this, but direct us to judge chiefly by the fruits that are seen in them. And it is against the doctrines of Scripture, which do plainly teach us, that the state of others' souls towards God cannot be known by us, as in Rev. ii. 17: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it." And Rom. ii. 29, "He is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God." That by this last expression, "whose praise is not of men, but of God," the apostle has respect to the insufficiency of men to judge concerning him, whether he be inwardly a Jew or no (as they could easily see by outward marks, whether men were outwardly Jews), and would signify, that it belongs to God alone to give a determining voice in this matter, is confirmed by the same apostle's use of the phrase, in 1 Cor. iv. 5: "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart:" and then shall every man have praise of God. The apostle, in the two foregoing verses, says, "But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing by myself, yet am I not hereby justified; but he that judgeth me is the Lord." And again, it is further confirmed, because the apostle, in this second chapter to the Romans, directs his speech especially to those who had a high conceit of their own holiness, made their boast of God, and were confident of their own discerning, and that they knew God's will, and approved the things which were excellent, or tried the things that differ (as it is in the margin), ver. 19: "And were confident that they were guides of the blind, and a light to them which are in darkness, instructors of the foolish, teachers of babes; and so took upon them to judge others." See ver. 1, and 17, 18, 19, 20.

And how arrogant must the notion be, that they have, who imagine they can certainly know others' godliness, when that great Apostle Peter pretends not to say any more concerning Sylvanus, than that he was a faithful brother, as he supposed! 1 Pet. v. 12. Though this Sylvanus appears to have been a very eminent minister of Christ, and an evangelist, and a famous light in God's church at that day, and an intimate companion of the apostles. See 2 Cor. i. 19, 1 Thess. i. 1, and 2 Thess. i 1.

PART III.

SHOWING WHAT ARE DISTINGUISHING SIGNS OF TRULY GRACIOUS AND HOLY AFFECTIONS.

I COME now to the second thing appertaining to the trial of religious affections, which was proposed, viz., To take notice of some things, wherein those affections that are spiritual and gracious, do differ from those that are not so.

But before I proceed directly to the distinguishing characters, I would previously mention some things which I desire may be observed, concerning the marks I shall lay down.

1. That I am far from undertaking to give such signs of gracious affections, as shall be sufficient to enable any certainly to distinguish true affection from false in others; or to determine positively which of their neighbors are true professors, and which are hypocrites. In so doing, I should be guilty of that arrogance which I have been condemning. Though it be plain that Christ has given rules to all Christians, to enable them to judge of professors of religion, whom they are concerned with, so far as is necessary for their own safety, and to prevent their being led into a snare by false teachers, and false pretenders to religion; and though it be also beyond doubt, that the Scriptures do abound with rules, which may be very serviceable to ministers, in counselling and conducting souls committed to their care, in things appertaining to their spiritual and eternal state; yet it is also evident, that it was never God's design to give us any rules, by which we may certainly know, who of our fellow professors are his, and to make a full and clear separation between sheep and goats; but that, on the contrary, it was God's design to reserve this to himself, as his prerogative. And therefore no such distinguishing signs as shall enable Christians or ministers to do this, are ever to be expected to the world's end: for no more is ever to be expected from any signs, that are to be found in the word of God, or gathered from it, than Christ designed them for.

2. No such signs are to be expected, that shall be sufficient to enable those saints certainly to discern their own good estate, who are very low in grace, or are such as have much departed from God, and are fallen into a dead, carnal, and unchristian frame. It is not agreeable to God's design (as has been already observed), that such should know their good estate: nor is it desirable that they should; but, on the contrary, every way best that they should not; and we have reason to bless God, that he has made no provision that such should certainly know the state that they are in, any other way than by first coming out of the ill frame and way they are in. Indeed it is not properly through the defect of the signs given in the word of God, that every saint living, whether strong or weak, and those who are in a bad frame, as well as others, cannot certainly know their good estate by them. For the rules in themselves are certain and infallible, and every saint has, or has had those things in himself, which are sure evidences of grace; for every, even the least act of grace is so. But it is through his defect to whom the signs are given. There is a twofold defect in that saint who is very low in grace, or in an ill frame, which makes it impossible for him to know certainly that he has true grace, by the best signs and rules which can be given him. First, a defect in the object, or the qualification to be viewed and examined. I do not mean an essential defect; because I suppose the per-

son to be a real saint; but a defect in degree: grace being very small, cannot be clearly and certainly discerned and distinguished.

Things that are very small, we cannot clearly discern their form, or distinguish them one from another; though, as they are in themselves, their form may be very different. There is doubtless a great difference between the body of man, and the bodies of other animals, in the first conception in the womb: but yet if we should view the different embryos, it might not be possible for us to discern the difference, by reason of the imperfect state of the object; but as it comes to greater perfection, the difference becomes very plain. The difference between creatures of very contrary qualities, is not so plainly to be seen while they are very young; even after they are actually brought forth, as in their more perfect state. The difference between doves and ravens, or doves and vultures, when they first come out of the egg, is not so evident; but as they grow to their perfection, it is exceeding great and manifest. Another defect attending the grace of those I am speaking of is its being mingled with so much corruption, which clouds and hides it, and makes it impossible for it certainly to be known. Though different things that are before us, may have in themselves many marks thoroughly distinguishing them one from another; yet if we see them only in a thick smoke, it may nevertheless be impossible to distinguish them. A fixed star is easily distinguishable from a comet, in a clear sky; but if we view them through a cloud, it may be impossible to see the difference When true Christians are in an ill frame, guilt lies on the conscience; which will bring fear, and so prevent the peace and joy of an assured hope.

Secondly. There is in such a case a defect in the eye. As the feebleness of grace and prevalence of corruption, obscures the object; so it enfeebles the sight; it darkens the sight as to all spiritual objects, of which grace is one. Sin is like some distempers of the eyes, that make things to appear of different colors from those which properly belong to them, and like many other distempers, that put the mouth out of taste so as to disenable it from distinguishing good and wholesome food from bad, but every thing tastes bitter.

Men in a corrupt and carnal frame, have their spiritual senses in but poor plight for judging and distinguishing spiritual things.

For these reasons no signs that can be given, will actually satisfy persons in such a case: let the signs that are given be never so good and infallible, and clearly laid down, they will not serve them. It is like giving a man rules, how to distinguish visible objects in the dark; the things themselves may be very different, and their difference may be very well and distinctly described to him; yet all is insufficient to enable him to distinguish them, because he is in the dark. And therefore many persons in such a case spend time in a fruitless labor, in poring on past experiences, and examining themselves by signs they hear laid down from the pulpit, or that they read in books; when there is other work for them to do, that is much more expected of them; which, while they neglect, all their self-examinations are like to be in vain if they should spend never so much time in them. The accursed thing is to be destroyed from their camp, and Achan to be slain; and until this be done they will be in trouble. It is not God's design that men should obtain assurance in any other way, than by mortifying corruption, and increasing in grace, and obtaining the lively exercises of it.—And although self-examination be a duty of great use and importance, and by no means to be neglected; yet it is not the principal means, by which the saints do get satisfaction of their good estate. Assurance is not to be obtained so much by *self-examination*, as by *action*. The Apostle Paul sought assurance chiefly this way, even by "forgetting the things that were behind,

and reaching forth unto those things that were before, pressing towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus; if by any means he might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." And it was by this means chiefly that he obtained assurance: 1 Cor. ix. 26, "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly." He obtained assurance of winning the prize, more by running, than by considering. The swiftness of his pace did more towards his assurance of a conquest, than the strictness of his examination. Giving all diligence to grow in grace, by adding to faith, virtue, &c., is the direction that the Apostle Peter gives us, for "making our calling and election sure, and having an entrance ministered to us abundantly, into Christ's everlasting kingdom;" signifying to us, that without this, our eyes will be dim, and we shall be as men in the dark, that cannot plainly see things past or to come, either the forgiveness of our sins past, or our heavenly inheritance that is future, and far off, 2 Pet. i. 5—11.*

Therefore, though good rules to distinguish true grace from counterfeit, may tend to convince hypocrites, and be of great use to the saints, in many respects; and among other benefits may be very useful to them to remove many needless scruples, and establish their hope; yet I am far from pretending to lay down any such rules, as shall be sufficient of themselves, without other means, to enable all true saints to see their good estate, or as supposing they should be the principal means of their satisfaction.

3. Nor is there much encouragement, in the experience of present or past times, to lay down rules or marks to distinguish between true and false affections, in hopes of convincing any considerable number of that sort of hypocrites, who have been deceived with great false discoveries and affections, and are once settled in a false confidence, and high conceit of their own supposed great experiences and privileges. Such hypocrites are so conceited of their own wisdom, and so blinded and hardened with a very great self-righteousness (but very subtle and secret, under the disguise of great humility), and so invincible a fondness of their pleasing conceit of their great exaltation, that it usually signifies nothing at all to lay before them the most convincing evidences of their hypocrisy. Their state is indeed deplorable, and next to those who have committed the unpardonable sin. Some of this sort of persons seem to be most out of the reach of means of conviction and repentance. But yet the laying down good rules may be a means of preventing such hypocrites, and of convincing many of other kinds of hypocrites; and God is able to convince even this kind, and his grace is not to be limited, nor means to be neglected. And besides, such rules may be of use to the true saints, to detect false affections, which they may have mingled with true; and be a means of their religion's becoming more pure, and like gold tried in the fire.

Having premised these things, I now proceed directly to take notice of those things in which true religious affections are distinguished from false.

I. Affections that are truly spiritual and gracious, do arise from those influences and operations on the heart, which are spiritual, supernatural and divine.

I will explain what I mean by these terms, whence will appear their use to distinguish between those affections which are spiritual, and those which are not so.

We find that true saints, or those persons who are sanctified by the Spirit of

* The way to know your godliness is to renew the visible exercises of grace.—The more the visible exercises of grace are renewed, the more certain you will be. The more frequently these actings are renewed, the more abiding and confirmed your assurance will be.

The more men's grace is multiplied, the more their peace is multiplied; 2 Pet. i. 2, "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you, through the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ our Lord." *Stoddard's Way to know Sincerity and Hypocrisy*, p. 139 and 142.

God, are in the New Testament called spiritual persons. And their being spiritual is spoken of as their peculiar character, and that wherein they are distinguished from those who are not sanctified. This is evident, because those who are spiritual are set in opposition to natural men, and carnal men. Thus the spiritual man and the natural man are set in opposition one to another, 1 Cor. ii. 14, 15: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things." The Scripture explains itself to mean an ungodly man, or one that has no grace, by a natural man: thus the Apostle Jude, speaking of certain ungodly men, that had crept in unawares among the saints, ver. 4, of his epistle, says, v. 19, "These are sensual, having not the Spirit." This the apostle gives as a reason why they behaved themselves in such a wicked manner as he had described. Here the word translated *sensual*, in the original is ψυχικοι, which is the very same, which in those verses in 1 Cor. chap. ii. is translated *natural*. In the like manner, in the continuation of the same discourse, in the next verse but one, spiritual men are opposed to carnal men; which the connection plainly shows mean the same, as spiritual men and natural men, in the foregoing verses; "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you, as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal;" i. e., as in a great measure unsanctified. That by carnal the apostle means corrupt and unsanctified, is abundantly evident, by Rom. vii. 25, and viii. 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, Gal. v. 16, to the end, Col. ii. 18. Now therefore, if by natural and carnal in these texts, be intended unsanctified, then doubtless by spiritual, which is opposed thereto, is meant sanctified and gracious.

And as the saints are called spiritual in Scripture, so we also find that there are certain properties, qualities, and principles, that have the same epithet given them. So we read of a "spiritual mind," Rom. viii. 6, 7, and of "spiritual wisdom," Col. i. 9, and of "spiritual blessings," Eph. i. 3.

Now it may be observed, that the epithet *spiritual*, in these and other parallel texts of the New Testament, is not used to signify any relation of persons or things to the spirit or soul of man, as the spiritual part of man, in opposition to the body, which is the material part. Qualities are not said to be spiritual, because they have their seat in the soul, and not in the body: for there are some properties that the Scripture calls *carnal* or *fleshly*, which have their seat as much in the soul, as those properties that are called *spiritual*. Thus it is with pride and self-righteousness, and a man's trusting to his own wisdom, which the apostle calls *fleshly*, Col. ii. 18. Nor are things called spiritual, because they are conversant about those things that are immaterial, and not corporeal. For so was the wisdom of the wise men, and princes of this world, conversant about spirits, and immaterial beings; which yet the apostle speaks of as natural men, totally ignorant of those things that are spiritual, 1 Cor. chap. ii. But it is with relation to the Holy Ghost, or Spirit of God, that persons or things are termed spiritual in the New Testament. Spirit, as the word is used to signify the third person in the Trinity, is the substantive, of which is formed the adjective spiritual, in the holy Scriptures. Thus Christians are called spiritual persons, because they are born of the Spirit, and because of the indwelling and holy influences of the Spirit of God in them. And things are called spiritual as related to the Spirit of God; 1 Cor. ii. 13, 14, "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God." Here the apostle himself expressly signifies, that by spiritual things, he means the things of the Spirit of God, and things

which the Holy Ghost teacheth. The same is yet more abundantly apparent by viewing the whole context. Again, Rom. viii. 6, "To be carnally minded, is death; to be spiritually minded, is life and peace." The apostle explains what he means by being carnally and spiritually minded in what follows in the 9th verse, and shows that by being spiritually minded, he means a having the indwelling and holy influences of the Spirit of God in the heart: "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." The same is evident by all the context. But time would fail to produce all the evidence there is of this, in the New Testament.

And it must be here observed, that although it is with relation to the Spirit of God and his influences, that persons and things are called spiritual; yet not all those persons who are subject to any kind of influence of the Spirit of God, are ordinarily called spiritual in the New Testament. They who have only the common influences of God's Spirit, are not so called, in the places cited above, but only those who have the special, gracious, and saving influences of God's Spirit; as is evident, because it has been already proved, that by spiritual men is meant godly men, in opposition to natural, carnal, and unsanctified men. And it is most plain, that the apostle by spiritually minded, Rom. viii. 6, means graciously minded. And though the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, which natural men might have, are sometimes called spiritual, because they are from the Spirit; yet natural men, whatever gifts of the Spirit they had, were not, in the usual language of the New Testament, called spiritual persons. For it was not by men's having the gifts of the Spirit, but by their having the virtues of the Spirit, that they were called spiritual; as is apparent by Gal. vi. 1: "Brethren, if any man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness." Meekness is one of those virtues which the apostle had just spoken of, in the verses next preceding, showing what are the fruits of the Spirit. Those qualifications are said to be spiritual in the language of the New Testament, which are truly gracious and holy, and peculiar to the saints.

Thus, when we read of spiritual wisdom and understanding (as in Col. i. 9, "We desire that ye may be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding"), hereby is intended that wisdom which is gracious, and from the sanctifying influences of the Spirit of God. For, doubtless, by spiritual wisdom is meant that which is opposite to what the Scripture calls natural wisdom; as the spiritual man is opposed to the natural man. And therefore spiritual wisdom is doubtless the same with that wisdom which is from above, that the Apostle James speaks of, Jam. iii. 17: "The wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle," &c., for this the apostle opposes to natural wisdom, ver. 15: "This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual"—the last word in the original is the same that is translated *natural*, in 1 Cor. ii. 14.

So that although natural men may be the subjects of many influences of the Spirit of God, as is evident by many Scriptures, as Numb. xxiv. 2, 1 Sam. x. 10, and xi. 6, and xvi. 14, 1 Cor. xiii. 1, 2, 3, Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6, and many others; yet they are not, in the sense of the Scripture, spiritual persons; neither are any of those effects, common gifts, qualities, or affections, that are from the influence of the Spirit of God upon them, called spiritual things. The great difference lies in these two things.

1. The Spirit of God is given to the true saints to dwell in them, as his proper lasting abode; and to influence their hearts, as a principle of new nature,

or as a divine supernatural spring of life and action. The Scriptures represent the Holy Spirit not only as moving, and occasionally influencing the saints, but as dwelling in them as his temple, his proper abode, and everlasting dwelling place, 1 Cor. iii. 16, 2 Cor. vi. 16, John xiv. 16, 17. And he is represented as being there so united to the faculties of the soul, that he becomes there a principle or spring of new nature and life.

So the saints are said to live by Christ living in them, Gal. ii. 20. Christ by his Spirit not only *is* in them, but *lives* in them; and so that they live by his life; so is his Spirit united to them, as a principle of life in them; they do not only drink living water, but this "living water becomes a well or fountain of water," in the soul, "springing up into spiritual and everlasting life," John iv. 14, and thus becomes a principle of life in them. This living water, this evangelist himself explains to intend the Spirit of God, chap. vii. 38, 39. The light of the Sun of righteousness does not only shine upon them, but is so communicated to them that they shine also, and become little images of that Sun which shines upon them; the sap of the true vine is not only conveyed into them, as the sap of a tree may be conveyed into a vessel, but is conveyed as sap is from a tree into one of its living branches, where it becomes a principle of life. The Spirit of God being thus communicated and united to the saints, they are from thence properly denominated from it, and are called *spiritual*.

On the other hand, though the Spirit of God may many ways influence natural men; yet because it is not thus communicated to them, as an indwelling principle, they do not derive any denomination or character from it: for, there being no union, it is not their own. The light may shine upon a body that is very dark or black; and though that body be the subject of the light, yet, because the light becomes no principle of light in it, so as to cause the body to shine, hence that body does not properly receive its denomination from it, so as to be called a lightsome body. So the Spirit of God acting upon the soul only, without communicating itself to be an active principle in it, cannot denominate it spiritual. A body that continues black, may be said not to have light, though the light shines upon it: so natural men are said "not to have the Spirit," Jude 19, sensual or natural (as the word is elsewhere rendered), having not the Spirit.

2. Another reason why the saints and their virtues are called spiritual (which is the principal thing) is, that the Spirit of God, dwelling as a vital principle in their souls, there produces those effects wherein he exerts and communicates himself in his own proper nature. Holiness is the nature of the Spirit of God, therefore he is called in Scripture the Holy Ghost. Holiness, which is as it were the beauty and sweetness of the divine nature, is as much the proper nature of the Holy Spirit, as heat is the nature of fire, or sweetness was the nature of that holy anointing oil, which was the principal type of the Holy Ghost in the Mosaic dispensation; yea, I may rather say, that holiness is as much the proper nature of the Holy Ghost, as sweetness was the nature of the sweet odor of that ointment. The Spirit of God so dwells in the hearts of the saints, that he there, as a seed or spring of life, exerts and communicates himself, in this his sweet and divine nature, making the soul a partaker of God's beauty and Christ's joy, so that the saint has truly fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, in thus having the communion or participation of the Holy Ghost. The grace which is in the hearts of the saints, is of the same nature with the divine holiness, as much as it is possible for that holiness to be, which is infinitely less in degree; as the brightness that is in a diamond which the sun shines upon, is of the same nature with the brightness of the sun, but only that it is as nothing to it in degree. Therefore Christ says, John iii. 6, "That which

is born of the Spirit, is spirit;" i. e., the grace that is begotten in the hearts of the saints, is something of the same nature with that Spirit, and so is properly called a spiritual nature; after the same manner as that which is born of the flesh is flesh, or that which is born of corrupt nature is corrupt nature.

But the Spirit of God never influences the minds of natural men after this manner. Though he may influence them many ways, yet he never, in any of his influences, communicates himself to them in his own proper nature. Indeed he never acts disagreeably to his nature, either on the minds of saints or sinners: but the Spirit of God may act upon men agreeably to his own nature, and not exert his proper nature in the acts and exercises of their minds: the Spirit of God may act so, that his actions may be agreeable to his nature, and yet may not at all communicate himself in his proper nature, in the effect of that action. Thus, for instance, the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, and there was nothing disagreeable to his nature in that action; but yet he did not at all communicate himself in that action, there was nothing of the proper nature of the Holy Spirit in that motion of the waters. And so he may act upon the minds of men many ways, and not communicate himself any more than when he acts on inanimate things.

Thus not only the manner of the relation of the Spirit, who is the operator, to the subject of his operations, is different; as the Spirit operates in the saints, as dwelling in them, as an abiding principle of action, whereas he doth not so operate upon sinners; but the influence and operation itself is different, and the effect wrought exceeding different. So that not only the persons are called *spiritual*, as having the Spirit of God dwelling in them; but those qualifications, affections, and experiences, that are wrought in them by the Spirit, are also *spiritual*, and therein differ vastly in their nature and kind from all that a natural man is or can be the subject of, while he remains in a natural state; and also from all that men or devils can be the authors of. It is a spiritual work in this high sense; and therefore above all other works is peculiar to the Spirit of God. There is no work so high and excellent; for there is no work wherein God doth so much communicate himself, and wherein the mere creature hath, in so high a sense, a participation of God; so that it is expressed in Scripture by the saints "being made partakers of the divine nature," 2 Pet. i. 4, and "having God dwelling in them, and they in God," 1 John iv. 12, 15, 16, and chap. iii. 21; "and having Christ in them," John xvii. 21, Rom. viii. 10; "being the temples of the living God," 2 Cor. vi. 16; "living by Christ's life," Gal. ii. 20; "being made partakers of God's holiness," Heb. xii. 10; "having Christ's love dwelling in them," John xvii. 26; "having his joy fulfilled in them," John xvii. 13; "seeing light in God's light, and being made to drink of the river of God's pleasures," Psal. xxxvi. 8, 9; "having fellowship with God, or communicating and partaking with him (as the word signifies)," 1 John i. 3. Not that the saints are made partakers of the essence of God, and so are *godded* with God, and *christed* with Christ, according to the abominable and blasphemous language and notions of some heretics: but, to use the Scripture phrase, they are made partakers of God's fulness, Eph. iii. 17, 18, 19, John i. 16, that is, of God's spiritual beauty and happiness, according to the measure and capacity of a creature; for so it is evident the word *fulness* signifies in Scripture language. Grace in the hearts of the saints, being therefore the most glorious work of God, wherein he communicates of the goodness of his nature, it is doubtless his peculiar work, and in an eminent manner above the power of all creatures. And the influences of the Spirit of God in this, being thus peculiar to God, and being those wherein God does, in so high a manner, communicate himself, and make the creature

partaker of the divine nature (the Spirit of God communicating itself in its own proper nature); this is what I mean by those influences that are divine, when I say that "truly gracious affections do arise from those influences that are spiritual and divine."

The true saints only have that which is spiritual; others have nothing which is divine, in the sense that has been spoken of. They not only have not these communications of the Spirit of God in so high a degree as the saints, but have nothing of that nature or kind. For the Apostle James tells us, that natural men have not the Spirit; and Christ teaches the necessity of a new birth, or of being born of the Spirit, from this, that he that is born of the flesh, has only flesh, and no spirit, John iii. 6. They have not the Spirit of God dwelling in them in any degree; for the apostle teaches, that all who have the Spirit of God dwelling in them, are some of his, Rom. viii. 9—11. And a having the Spirit of God is spoken of as a certain sign that persons shall have the eternal inheritance; for it is spoken of as the earnest of it, 2 Cor. i. 22, and v. 5, Eph. i. 14; and a having any thing of the Spirit is mentioned as a sure sign of being in Christ, 1 John iv. 13: "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, because he hath given us of his Spirit." Ungodly men not only have not so much of the divine nature as the saints, but they are not partakers of it; which implies that they have nothing of it; for a being partaker of the divine nature is spoken of as the peculiar privilege of the true saints, 2 Pet. i. 4. Ungodly men are not "partakers of God's holiness," Heb. xii. 10. A natural man has no experience of any of those things that are spiritual: the apostle teaches us, that he is so far from it, that he knows nothing about them, he is a perfect stranger to them, the talk about such things is all foolishness and nonsense to him, he knows not what it means; 1 Cor. ii. 14, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." And to the like purpose Christ teaches us that the world is wholly unacquainted with the Spirit of God, John xiv. 17: "Even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him." And it is further evident, that natural men have nothing in them of the same nature with the true grace of the saints, because the apostle teaches us, that those of them who go farthest in religion have no charity, or true Christian love, 1 Cor. chap. xiii. So Christ elsewhere reproves the Pharisees, those high pretenders to religion, that they "had not the love of God in them," John v. 42. Hence natural men have no communion or fellowship with Christ, or participation with him (as these words signify), for this is spoken of as the peculiar privilege of the saints, 1 John i. 3, together with ver. 6, 7, and 1 Cor. i. 8, 9. And the Scripture speaks of the actual being of a gracious principle in the soul, though in its first beginning, as a seed there planted, as inconsistent with a man's being a sinner, 1 John iii. 9. And natural men are represented in Scripture, as having no spiritual light, no spiritual life, and no spiritual being; and therefore conversion is often compared to opening the eyes of the blind, raising the dead, and a work of creation (wherein creatures are made entirely new), and becoming new-born children.

From these things it is evident, that those gracious influences which the saints are subjects of, and the effects of God's Spirit which they experience, are entirely above nature, altogether of a different kind from any thing that men find within themselves by nature, or only in the exercise of natural principles; and are things which no improvement of those qualifications, or principles that are natural, no advancing or exalting them to higher degrees, and no kind of

composition of them, will ever bring men to; because they not only differ from what is natural, and from every thing that natural men experience, in degree and circumstances, but also in kind; and are of a nature vastly more excellent. And this is what I mean, by supernatural, when I say that gracious affections are from those influences that are supernatural.

From hence it follows, that in those gracious exercises and affections which are wrought in the minds of the saints, through the saving influences of the Spirit of God, there is a new inward perception or sensation of their minds, entirely different in its nature and kind, from any thing that ever their minds were the subjects of before they were sanctified. For doubtless if God by his mighty power produces something that is new, not only in degree and circumstances, but in its whole nature, and that which could be produced by no exalting, varying, or compounding of what was there before, or by adding any thing of the like kind; I say, if God produces something thus new in a mind, that is a perceiving, thinking, conscious thing; then doubtless something entirely new is felt, or perceived, or thought; or, which is the same thing, there is some new sensation or perception of the mind, which is entirely of a new sort, and which could be produced by no exalting, varying, or compounding of that kind of perceptions or sensations which the mind had before; or there is what some metaphysicians call a new simple idea. If grace be, in the sense above described, an entirely new kind of principle, then the exercises of it are also entirely a new kind of exercises. And if there be in the soul a new sort of exercises which it is conscious of, which the soul knew nothing of before, and which no improvement, composition, or management of what it was before conscious or sensible of, could produce, or any thing like it; then it follows that the mind has an entirely new kind of perception or sensation; and here is, as it were, a new spiritual sense that the mind has, or a principle of a new kind of perception or spiritual sensation, which is in its whole nature different from any former kinds of sensation of the mind, as tasting is diverse from any of the other senses; and something is perceived by a true saint, in the exercise of this new sense of mind, in spiritual and divine things, as entirely diverse from any thing that is perceived in them, by natural men, as the sweet taste of honey is diverse from the ideas men have of honey by only looking on it, and feeling of it. So that the spiritual perceptions which a sanctified and spiritual person has, are not only diverse from all that natural men have after the manner that the ideas or perceptions of the same sense may differ one from another, but rather as the ideas and sensations of different senses do differ. Hence the work of the Spirit of God in regeneration is often in Scripture compared to the giving a new sense, giving eyes to see, and ears to hear, unstopping the ears of the deaf, and opening the eyes of them that were born blind, and turning from darkness unto light. And because this spiritual sense is immensely the most noble and excellent, and that without which all other principles of perception, and all our faculties are useless and vain; therefore the giving this new sense, with the blessed fruits and effects of it in the soul, is compared to a raising the dead, and to a new creation.

This new spiritual sense, and the new dispositions that attend it, are no new faculties, but are new principles of nature. I use the word principles for want of a word of a more determinate signification. By a principle of nature in this place, I mean that foundation which is laid in nature, either old or new, for any particular manner or kind of exercise of the faculties of the soul; or a natural habit or foundation for action, giving a personal ability and disposition to exert the faculties in exercises of such a certain kind; so that to exert the faculties

in that kind of exercises may be said to be his nature. So this new spiritual sense is not a new faculty of understanding, but it is a new foundation laid in the nature of the soul, for a new kind of exercises of the same faculty of understanding. So that new holy disposition of heart that attends this new sense is not a new faculty of will, but a foundation laid in the nature of the soul, for a new kind of exercises of the same faculty of will.

The Spirit of God, in all his operations upon the minds of natural men, only moves, impresses, assists, improves, or some way acts upon natural principles; but gives no new spiritual principle. Thus when the Spirit of God gives a natural man visions, as he did Balaam, he only impresses a natural principle, viz., the sense of seeing, immediately exciting ideas of that sense; but he gives no new sense; neither is there any thing supernatural, spiritual, or divine in it. So if the Spirit of God impresses on a man's imagination, either in a dream, or when he is awake, any outward ideas of any of the senses, either voices, or shapes and colors, it is only exciting ideas of the same kind that he has by natural principles and senses. So if God reveals to any natural man any secret fact: as, for instance, something that he shall hereafter see or hear; this is not infusing or exercising any new spiritual principle, or giving the ideas of any new spiritual sense; it is only impressing, in an extraordinary manner, the ideas that will hereafter be received by sight and hearing.—So in the more ordinary influences of the Spirit of God on the hearts of sinners, he only assists natural principles to do the same work to a greater degree, which they do of themselves by nature. Thus the Spirit of God by his common influences may assist men's natural ingenuity, as he assisted Bezaleel and Aholiab in the curious works of the tabernacle: so he may assist men's natural abilities in political affairs, and improve their courage and other natural qualifications, as he is said to have put his spirit on the seventy elders, and on Saul, so as to give him another heart: so God may greatly assist natural men's reason, in their reasoning about secular things, or about the doctrines of religion, and may greatly advance the clearness of their apprehensions and notions of things of religion in many respects, without giving any spiritual sense. So in those awakenings and convictions that natural men may have, God only assists conscience, which is a natural principle, to do that work in a further degree, which it naturally does. Conscience naturally gives men an apprehension of right and wrong, and suggests the relation there is between right and wrong, and a retribution: the Spirit of God assists men's consciences to do this in a greater degree, helps conscience against the stupifying influence of worldly objects and their lusts. And so many other ways might be mentioned wherein the Spirit acts upon, assists, and moves natural principles; but after all it is no more than nature moved, acted and improved; here is nothing supernatural and divine. But the Spirit of God in his spiritual influences on the hearts of his saints, operates by infusing or exercising new, divine, and supernatural principles; principles which are indeed a new and spiritual nature, and principles vastly more noble and excellent than all that is in natural men.

From what has been said it follows, that all spiritual and gracious affections are attended with and do arise from some apprehension, idea, or sensation of mind, which is in its whole nature different, yea, exceeding different, from all that is, or can be in the mind of a natural man; and which the natural man discerns nothing of, and has no manner of idea of (agreeable to 1 Cor. ii. 14), and conceives of no more than a man without the sense of tasting can conceive of the sweet taste of honey, or a man without the sense of hearing can conceive of the melody of a tune, or a man born blind can have a notion of the beauty of the rainbow.

But here two things must be observed, in order to the right understanding of this.

1. On the one hand it must be observed, that not every thing which in any respect appertains to spiritual affections, is new and entirely different from what natural men can conceive of, and do experience; some things are common to gracious affections with other affections; many circumstances, appendages and effects are common. Thus a saint's love to God has a great many things appertaining to it, which are common with a man's natural love to a near relation; love to God makes a man have desires of the honor of God, and a desire to please him; so does a natural man's love to his friend make him desire his honor, and desire to please him; love to God causes a man to delight in the thoughts of God, and to delight in the presence of God, and to desire conformity to God, and the enjoyment of God; and so it is with a man's love to his friend; and many other things might be mentioned which are common to both. But yet that idea which the saint has of the loveliness of God, and that sensation, and that kind of delight he has in that view, which is as it were the marrow and quintessence of his love, is peculiar, and entirely diverse from any thing that a natural man has, or can have any notion of. And even in those things that seem to be common, there is something peculiar; both spiritual and natural love cause desires after the object beloved; but they be not the same sort of desires: there is a sensation of soul in the spiritual desires of one that loves God, which is entirely different from all natural desires: both spiritual love and natural love are attended with delight in the object beloved; but the sensations of delight are not the same, but entirely and exceedingly diverse. Natural men may have conceptions of many things about spiritual affections; but there is something in them which is as it were the nucleus, or kernel of them, that they have no more conception of, than one born blind, has of colors.

It may be clearly illustrated by this: we will suppose two men; one is born without the sense of tasting, the other has it; the latter loves honey, and is greatly delighted in it, because he knows the sweet taste of it; the other loves certain sounds and colors; the love of each has many things that appertain to it, which is common; it causes both to desire and delight in the object beloved, and causes grief when it is absent, &c., but yet that idea or sensation which he who knows the taste of honey has of its excellency and sweetness, that is the foundation of his love, is entirely different from any thing the other has or can have; and that delight which he has in honey is wholly diverse from any thing that the other can conceive of, though they both delight in their beloved objects. So both these persons may in some respects love the same object: the one may love a delicious kind of fruit, which is beautiful to the eye, and of a delicious taste; not only because he has seen its pleasant colors, but knows its sweet taste; the other, perfectly ignorant of this, loves it only for its beautiful colors: there are many things seen, in some respect, to be common to both; both love, both desire, and both delight; but the love and desire, and delight of the one, is altogether diverse from that of the other. The difference between the love of a natural man and a spiritual man is like to this; but only it must be observed, that in one respect it is vastly greater, viz., that the kinds of excellency which are perceived in spiritual objects, by these different kinds of persons, are in themselves vastly more diverse than the different kinds of excellency perceived in delicious fruit, by a tasting and a tasteless man; and in another respect it may not be so great, viz., as the spiritual man may have a spiritual sense or taste, to perceive that divine and most peculiar excellency but in small beginnings, and in a very imperfect degree.

2. On the other hand, it must be observed that a natural man may have those religious apprehensions and affections, which may be in many respects very new and surprising to him, and what before he did not conceive of; and yet what he experiences be nothing like the exercises of a principle of new nature, or the sensations of a new spiritual sense; his affections may be very new, by extraordinarily moving natural principles in a very new degree, and with a great many new circumstances, and a new co-operation of natural affections, and a new composition of ideas; this may be from some extraordinary powerful influence of Satan, and some great delusion; but there is nothing but nature extraordinarily acted. As if a poor man that had always dwelt in a cottage and, had never looked beyond the obscure village where he was born, should in a jest be taken to a magnificent city and prince's court, and there arrayed in princely robes, and set on the throne, with the crown royal on his head, peers and nobles bowing before him, and should be made to believe that he was now a glorious monarch; the ideas he would have, and the affections he would experience, would in many respects be very new, and such as he had no imagination of before; but all this is no more than extraordinarily raising and exciting natural principles, and newly exalting, varying, and compounding such sort of ideas, as he has by nature; here is nothing like giving him a new sense.

Upon the whole, I think it is clearly manifest, that all truly gracious affections do arise from special and peculiar influences of the Spirit, working that sensible effect or sensation in the souls of the saints, which are entirely different from all that is possible a natural man should experience, not only different in degree and circumstances, but different in its whole nature; so that a natural man not only cannot experience that which is individually the same, but cannot experience any thing but what is exceeding diverse, and immensely below it, in its kind; and that which the power of men or devils is not sufficient to produce the like of, or any thing of the same nature.

I have insisted largely on this matter, because it is of great importance and use evidently to discover and demonstrate the delusions of Satan, in many kinds of false religious affections, which multitudes are deluded by, and probably have been in all ages of the Christian church; and to settle and determine many articles of doctrine, concerning the operations of the Spirit of God, and the nature of true grace.

Now, therefore, to apply these things to the purpose of this discourse.

From hence it appears, that impressions which some have made on their imagination, or the imaginary ideas which they have of God or Christ, or heaven, or any thing appertaining to religion, have nothing in them that is spiritual, or of the nature of true grace. Though such things may attend what is spiritual, and be mixed with it, yet in themselves they have nothing that is spiritual, nor are they any part of gracious experience.

Here, for the sake of common people, I will explain what is intended by impressions on the imagination and imaginary ideas. The imagination is that power of the mind whereby it can have a conception, or idea of things of an external or outward nature (that is, of such sort of things as are the objects of the outward senses) when those things are not present, and be not perceived by the senses. It is called imagination from the word *image;* because thereby a person can have an image of some external thing in his mind, when that thing is not present in reality, nor any thing like it. All such things as we perceive by our five external senses, seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and feeling, are external things: and when a person has an idea or image of any of these sorts

of things in his mind, when they are not there, and when he does not really see, hear, smell, taste, nor feel them; that is to have an imagination of them, and these ideas are imaginary ideas: and when such kinds of ideas are strongly impressed upon the mind, and the image of them in the mind is very lively, almost as if one saw them, or heard them, &c., that is called an impression on the imagination. Thus colors and shapes, and a form of countenance, they are outward things; because they are that sort of things which are the objects of the outward sense of seeing; and therefore when any person has in his mind a lively idea of any shape, or color, or form of countenance; that is to have an imagination of those things. So if he has an idea, of such sort of light or darkness, as he perceives by the sense of seeing; that is to have an idea of outward light, and so is an imagination. So if he has an idea of any marks made on paper, suppose letters and words written in a book; that is to have an external and imaginary idea of such kind of things as we sometimes perceive by our bodily eyes. And when we have the ideas of that kind of things which we perceive by any of the other senses, as of any sounds or voices, or words spoken; this is only to have ideas of outward things, viz., of such kind of things as are perceived by the external sense of hearing, and so that also is imagination: and when these ideas are livelily impressed, almost as if they were really heard with the ears, this is to have an impression on the imagination. And so I might go on, and instance in the ideas of things appertaining to the other three senses of smelling, tasting, and feeling.

Many who have had such things have very ignorantly supposed them to be of the nature of spiritual discoveries. They have had lively ideas of some external shape, and beautiful form of countenance; and this they call spiritually seeing Christ. Some have had impressed upon them ideas of a great outward light; and this they call a spiritual discovery of God's or Christ's glory. Some have had ideas of Christ's hanging on the cross, and his blood running from his wounds; and this they call a spiritual sight of Christ crucified, and the way of salvation by his blood. Some have seen him with his arms open ready to embrace them; and this they call a discovery of the sufficiency of Christ's grace and love. Some have had lively ideas of heaven, and of Christ on his throne there, and shining ranks of saints and angels: and this they call seeing heaven opened to them. Some from time to time have had a lively idea of a person of a beautiful countenance smiling upon them; and this they call a spiritual discovery of the love of Christ to their souls, and tasting the love of Christ. And they look upon it a sufficient evidence that these things are spiritual discoveries, and that they see them spiritually, because they say they do not see these things with their bodily eyes, but in their hearts; for they can see them when their eyes are shut. And in like manner, the imaginations of some have been impressed with ideas of the sense of hearing; they have had ideas of words, as if they were spoken to them, sometimes they are the words of Scripture, and sometimes other words: they have had ideas of Christ's speaking comfortable words to them. These things they have called having the inward call of Christ, hearing the voice of Christ spiritually in their hearts, having the witness of the Spirit, and the inward testimony of the love of Christ, &c.

The common and less considerate and understanding sort of people, are the more easily led into apprehensions that these things are spiritual things, because spiritual things being invisible, and not things that can be pointed forth with the finger, we are forced to use figurative expressions in speaking of them, and to borrow names from external and sensible objects to signify them by. Thus we call a clear apprehension of things spiritual by the name of *light;* and a

having such an apprehension of such or such things, by the name of *seeing* such things; and the conviction of the judgment, and the persuasion of the will, by the word of Christ in the gospel, we signify by spiritually hearing the call of Christ: and the Scripture itself abounds with such like figurative expressions. Persons hearing these often used, and having pressed upon them the necessity of having their eyes opened, and having a discovery of spiritual things, and seeing Christ in his glory, and having the inward call, and the like, they ignorantly look and wait for some such external discoveries, and imaginary views as have been spoken of; and when they have them are confident, that now their eyes are opened, now Christ has discovered himself to them, and they are his children; and hence are exceedingly affected and elevated with their deliverance and happiness, and many kinds of affections are at once set in a violent motion in them.

But it is exceedingly apparent that such ideas have nothing in them which is spiritual and divine, in the sense wherein it has been demonstrated that all gracious experiences are spiritual and divine. These external ideas are in no wise of such a sort, that they are entirely, and in their whole nature diverse from all that men have by nature, perfectly different from, and vastly above any sensation which it is possible a man should have by any natural sense or principle, so that in order to have them, a man must have a new spiritual and divine sense given him, in order to have any sensations of that sort: so far from this, that they are ideas of the same sort which we have by the external senses, that are some of the inferior powers of the human nature; they are merely ideas of external objects, or ideas of that nature, of the same outward, sensitive kind; the same sort of sensations of mind (differing not in degree, but only in circumstances) that we have by those natural principles which are common to us with the beasts, viz., the five external senses. This is a low, miserable notion of spiritual sense, to suppose that it is only a conceiving or imagining that sort of ideas which we have by our animal senses, which senses the beasts have in as great perfection as we; it is, as it were, a turning Christ, or the divine nature in the soul, into a mere animal. There is nothing wanting in the soul, as it is by nature, to render it capable of being the subject of all these external ideas, without any new principles. A natural man is capable of having an idea, and a lively idea of shapes, and colors, and sounds, when they are absent, and as capable as a regenerate man is: so there is nothing supernatural in them. And it is known by abundant experience, that it is not the advancing or perfecting human nature, which makes persons more capable of having such lively and strong imaginary ideas, but that on the contrary, the weakness of body and mind, and distempers of body, make persons abundantly more susceptive of such impressions.*

As to a truly spiritual sensation, not only is the manner of its coming into the mind extraordinary, but the sensation itself is totally diverse from all that men have, or can have, in a state of nature, as has been shown. But as to these external ideas, though the way of their coming into the mind is sometimes unusual, yet the ideas in themselves are not the better for that; they are still of no different sort from what men have by their senses; they are of no higher kind, nor a whit better. For instance, the external idea a man has now

* "Conceits and whimsies abound most in men of weak reason; children, and such as are cracked in their understanding, have most of them; strength of reason banishes them, as the sun does mists and vapors. But now the more rational any gracious person is, by so much more is he fixed and settled, and satisfied in the grounds of religion: yea, there is the highest and purest reason in religion; and when this change is wrought upon men, it is carried on in a rational way. Isa. i. 18, John xix. 9." *Flavel's Preparation for Sufferings*, Chap. vi.

of Christ hanging on the cross, and shedding his blood, is no better in itself, than the external idea that the Jews his enemies had, who stood round his cross, and saw this with their bodily eyes. The imaginary idea which men have now of an external brightness and glory of God, is no better than the idea the wicked congregation in the wilderness had of the external glory of the Lord at Mount Sinai, when they saw it with their bodily eyes; or any better than that idea which millions of cursed reprobates will have of the external glory of Christ at the day of judgment, who shall see, and have a very lively idea of ten thousand times greater external glory of Christ, than ever yet was conceived in any man's imagination:* yea, the image of Christ, which men conceive in their imaginations, is not in its own nature of any superior kind to the idea the Papists conceive of Christ, by the beautiful and affecting images of him which they see in their churches (though the way of their receiving the idea may not be so bad); nor are the affections they have, if built primarily on such imaginations, any better than the affections raised in the ignorant people, by the sight of those images, which oftentimes are very great; especially when these images, through the craft of the priests, are made to move, and speak, and weep, and the like.† Merely the way of persons receiving these imaginary ideas, does not alter the nature of the ideas themselves that are received; let them be received in what way they will, they are still but external ideas, or ideas of outward appearances, and so are not spiritual. Yea, if men should actually receive such external ideas by the immediate power of the most high God upon their minds, they would not be spiritual, they would be no more than a common work of the Spirit of God; as is evident in fact, in the instance of Balaam, who had impressed on his mind, by God himself, a clear and lively outward representation or idea of Jesus Christ, as "the Star rising out of Jacob, when he heard the words of God, and knew the knowledge of the Most High, and saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance," Numb. xxiv. 16, 17, but yet had no manner of spiritual discovery of Christ; that Day Star never spiritually rose in his heart, he being but a natural man.

And as these external ideas have nothing divine or spiritual in their nature and nothing but what natural men, without any new principles, are capable of; so there is nothing in their nature which requires that peculiar, inimitable and unparalleled exercise of the glorious power of God, in order to their production, which it has been shown there is in the production of true grace. There appears to be nothing in their nature above the power of the devil. It is certainly not above the power of Satan to suggest thoughts to men; because otherwise he could not tempt them to sin. And if he can suggest any thoughts or ideas at all, doubtless imaginary ones, or ideas of things external, are not above his pow-

* "If any man should see, and behold Christ really and immediately, this is not the saving knowledge of him. I know the saints do know Christ as if immediately present; they are not strangers by their distance: if others have seen him more immediately, I will not dispute it. But if they have seen the Lord Jesus as immediately as if here on earth, yet Capernaum saw him so; nay, some of them were disciples for a time, and followed him, John vi. And yet the Lord was hid from their eyes. Nay, all the world shall see him in his glory, which shall amaze them; and yet this is far short of having the saving knowledge of him, which the Lord doth communicate to the elect. So that though you see the Lord so really, as that you become familiar with him, yet, Luke xiii. 26: 'Lord have we not eat and drank,' &c.—and so perish." *Shepard's Par. of the Ten Virgins*, Part I. p. 197, 198.

† "Satan is transformed into an angel of light: and hence we have heard that some have heard voices; some have seen the very blood of Christ dropping on them, and his wounds in his side: some have seen a great light shining in the chamber; some have been wonderfully affected with their dreams; some in great distress have had inward witness, 'Thy sins are forgiven;' and hence such liberty and joy, that they are ready to leap up and down the chamber. O adulterous generation! this is natural and usual with men, they would fain see Jesus, and have him present to give them peace; and hence Papists have his images. Wo to them that have no other manifested Christ, but such a one." *Shepard's Parable of the Ten Virgins*, Part I. p. 198.

er ;* for the external ideas men have are the lowest sort of ideas. These ideas may be raised only by impressions made on the body, by moving the animal spirits, and impressing the brain.—Abundant experience does certainly show, that alterations in the body will excite imaginary or external ideas in the mind ; as often, in the case of a high fever, melancholy, &c. These external ideas are as much below the more intellectual exercises of the soul, as the body is a less noble part of man than the soul.

And there is not only nothing in the nature of these external ideas or imaginations of outward appearances, from whence we can infer that they are above the power of the devil ; but it is certain also that the devil can excite, and often hath excited such ideas. They were external ideas which he excited in the dreams and visions of the false prophets of old, who were under the influence of lying spirits, that we often read of in Scripture, as Deut. xiii. i., 1 Kings xxii. 22, Isa. xxviii. 7, Ezek. xiii. 7. And they were external ideas that he often excited in the minds of the heathen priests, magicians and sorcerers, in their visions and ecstasies, and they were external ideas that he excited in the mind of the man Christ Jesus, when he showed him all the kingdoms of the world, with the glory of them, when those kingdoms were not really in sight.

And if Satan or any created being, has power to impress the mind with outward representations, then no particular sort of outward representations can be any evidence of a divine power. Almighty power is no more requisite to represent the shape of man to the imagination, than the shape of anything else : there is no higher kind of power necessary to form in the brain one bodily shape or color than another : it needs a no more glorious power to represent the form of the body of a man, than the form of a chip or block ; though it be of a very beautiful human body, with a sweet smile in his countenance, or arms open, or blood running from the hands, feet and side : that sort of power which can represent black or darkness to the imagination, can also represent white and shining brightness : the power and skill which can well and exactly paint a straw, or a stick of wood, on a piece of paper or canvass ; the same in kind, only perhaps further improved, will be sufficient to paint the body of a man, with great beauty and in royal majesty, or a magnificent city, paved with gold, full of brightness, and a glorious throne, &c. So it is no more than the same sort of power that is requisite to paint one as the other of these on the brain. The same sort of power that can put ink upon paper, can put on leaf gold. So that it is evident to a demonstration, if we suppose it to be in the devil's power to make any sort of external representation at all on the fancy (as without doubt it is, and never any one questioned it who believed there was a devil, that had any agency with mankind) : I say, if so, it is demonstrably evident, that a created power may extend to all kinds of external appearances and ideas in the mind. From hence it again clearly appears, that no such things have any thing in them that is spiritual, supernatural, and divine, in the sense in which it has been proved that all truly gracious experiences have. And though external ideas, through man's make and frame, do ordinarily in some degree attend spiritual experiences, yet these ideas are no part of their spiritual experience, any more than the motion of the blood, and beating of the pulse, that attend experiences, are a part of spiritual experience. And though undoubtedly, through men's infirmity in the present state, and especially through the weak constitution of some persons,

* "Consider how difficult, yea and impossible it is to determine that such a voice, vision, or revelation is of God, and that Satan cannot feign or counterfeit it : seeing he hath left no certain marks by which we may distinguish one spirit from another." *Flavel's Causes and Cures of Mental Terrors*, Cause 14.

gracious affections which are very strong, do excite lively ideas in the imagination; yet it is also undoubted, that when persons' affections are founded on imaginations, which is often the case, those affections are merely natural and common, because they are built on a foundation that is not spiritual; and so are entirely different from gracious affections, which, as has been proved, do evermore arise from those operations that are spiritual and divine.

These imaginations do oftentimes raise the carnal affections of men to an exceeding great height:* and no wonder, when the subjects of them have an ignorant, but undoubting persuasion, that they are divine manifestations, which the great Jehovah immediately makes to their souls, therein giving them testimonies in an extraordinary manner, of his high and peculiar favor.

Again, it is evident from what has been observed and proved of the manner in which gracious operations and effects in the heart are spiritual, supernatural and divine, that the immediate suggesting of the words of Scripture to the mind has nothing in it which is spiritual.

I have had occasion to say something of this already; and what has been said may be sufficient to evince it; but if the reader bears in mind what has been said concerning the nature of spiritual influences and effects, it will be more abundantly manifest that this is no spiritual effect. For I suppose there is

* There is a remarkable passage of Mr. John Smith, in his discourse on the shortness of a Pharisaic righteousness, p. 370, 371, of his select discourses, describing that sort of religion which is built on such a foundation as I am here speaking of. I cannot forbear transcribing the whole of it. Speaking of a sort of Christians, whose life is nothing but a strong energy of fancy, he says: "Lest their religion might too grossly discover itself to be nothing else but a piece of art, there may be sometimes such extraordinary motions stirred up within them, which may prevent all their own thoughts, that they may seem to be a true operation of the divine life; when yet all this is nothing else but the energy of their own self-love, touched with some fleshly apprehensions of divine things, and excited by them. There are such things in our Christian religion, when a carnal, unhallowed mind takes the chair and gets the expounding of them, may seem very delicious to the fleshly appetites of men; some doctrines and notions of free grace and justification, the magnificent titles of sons of God and heirs of heaven, ever flowing streams of joy and pleasure that blessed souls shall swim in to all eternity, a glorious paradise in the world to come, always springing up with well scented and fragrant beauties, a new Jerusalem paved with gold, and bespangled with stars, comprehending in its vast circuit such numberless varieties, that a busy curiosity may spend itself about to all eternity. I doubt not but that sometimes the most fleshly and earthly men, that fly in their ambition to the pomp of this world, may be so ravished with the conceits of such things as these, that they may seem to be made partakers of the powers of the world to come. I doubt not but that they might be much exalted with them, as the souls of crazed or distracted persons seem to be sometimes, when their fancies play with those quick and nimble spirits, which a distempered frame of body, and unnatural heat in their heads, beget within them. Thus may these blazing comets rise up above the moon, and climb higher than the sun; which yet, because they have no solid consistence of their own, and are of a base and earthly alloy, will soon vanish and fall down again, being only borne up by an external force. They may seem to themselves to have attained higher than those noble Christians that are gently moved by the natural force of true goodness: they seem to be *plenores Deo* (i. e., more full of God) than those that are really informed and actuated by the divine Spirit, and do move on steadily and constantly in the way towards heaven. As the seed that was sown in stony ground, grew up, and lengthened out its blade faster, than that which was sown in the good and fruitful soil. And as the motions of our sense, and fancy, and passions, while our souls are in this mortal condition, sunk down deeply into the body, are many times more vigorous, and make stronger impressions upon us, than those of the higher powers of the soul, which are more subtle, and remote from these mixed animal perceptions: that devotion which is there seated, may seem to have more energy and life in it, than that which gently, and with a more delicate kind of touch spreads itself upon the understanding, and from thence mildly derives itself through our wills and affections. But however the former may be more boisterous for a time, yet this is of a more consistent, spermatical and thriving nature. For that proceeding indeed from nothing but a sensual and fleshly apprehension of God and true happiness, is but of a flitting and fading nature; and as the sensible powers and faculties grow more languid, or the sun of divine light shines more brightly upon us, these earthly devotions, like our culinary fires, will abate their heat and fervor. But a true celestial warmth will never be extinguished, because it is of an immortal nature; and being once seated vitally in the souls of men, it will regulate and order all the motions of it in a due manner, as the natural heat, radicated in the hearts of living creatures, hath the dominion and economy of the whole body under it. True religion is no piece of artifice; it is no boiling up of our imaginative powers, nor the glowing heats of passion; though these are too often mistaken for it, when in our jugglings in religion we cast a mist before our own eyes: but it is a new nature, informing the souls of men; it is a Godlike frame of spirit, discovering itself most of all in serene and clear minds, in deep humility, meekness, self-denial universal love to God and all true goodness, without partiality, and without hypocrisy whereby we are taught to know God, and knowing him to love him, and conform ourselves as much as may be to all that perfection which shines in him.

no person of common understanding, who will say or imagine that the bringing words (let them be what words they will) to the mind is an effect of that nature which it is impossible the mind of a natural man, while he remains in a state of nature, should be the subject of, or any thing like it; or that it requires any new divine sense in the soul; or that the bringing sounds or letters to the mind, is an effect of so high, holy, and excellent a nature, that it is impossible any created power should be the cause of it.

As the suggesting words of Scripture to the mind, is only the exciting in the mind ideas of certain sounds or letters; so it is only one way of exciting ideas in the imagination; for sounds and letters are external things, that are the objects of the external senses of seeing and hearing. Ideas of certain marks upon paper, such as any of the twenty-four letters, in whatever order, or any sounds of the voice, are as much external ideas, as of any other shapes or sounds whatsoever; and therefore, by what has been already said concerning these external ideas, it is evident they are nothing spiritual; and if at any time the Spirit of God suggests these letters or sounds to the mind, this is a common, and not any special or gracious influence of that Spirit. And therefore it follows from what has been already proved, that those affections which have this effect for their foundation, are no spiritual or gracious affections. But let it be observed what it is that I say, viz., when this effect, even the immediate and extraordinary manner of words of Scripture's coming to the mind, is that which excites the affections, and is properly the foundation of them, then these affections are not spiritual. It may be so, that persons may have gracious affections going with Scriptures which come to their minds, and the Spirit of God may make use of those Scriptures to excite them; when it is some spiritual sense, taste or relish they have of the divine and excellent things contained in those Scriptures, that is the thing which excites their affections, and not the extraordinary and sudden manner of words being brought to their minds. They are affected with the instruction they receive from the words, and the view of the glorious things of God or Christ, and things appertaining to them, that they contain and teach; and not because the words came suddenly, as though some person had spoken them to them, thence concluding that God did as it were immediately speak to them. Persons oftentimes are exceedingly affected on this foundation; the words of some great and high promises of Scripture came suddenly to their minds, and they look upon the words as directed immediately by God to them, as though the words that moment proceeded out of the mouth of God as spoken to them: so that they take it as a voice from God, immediately revealing to them their happy circumstances, and promising such and such great things to them: and this it is that effects and elevates them. There is no new spiritual understanding of the divine things contained in the Scripture, or new spiritual sense of the glorious things taught in that part of the Bible going before their affection, and being the foundation of it. All the new understanding they have, or think they have, to be the foundation of their affection, is this, that the words are spoken to them, because they come so suddenly and extraordinarily. And so this affection is built wholly on the sand! Because it is built on a conclusion for which they have no foundation. For, as has been shown, the sudden coming of the words to their minds, is no evidence that the bringing them to their minds in that manner was from God. And if it was true that God brought the words to their minds, and they certainly knew it, that would not be spiritual knowledge; it may be without any spiritual sense: Balaam might know that the words which God suggested to him, were indeed suggested to him by God, and yet have no spiritual knowledge. So that these affections which are

built on that notion, that texts of Scripture are sent immediately from God, are built on no spiritual foundation, and are vain and delusive. Persons who have their affections thus raised, if they should be inquired of, whether they have any new sense of the excellency of things contained in those Scriptures, would probably say, *Yes*, without hesitation: but it is true no otherwise than thus, that when they have taken up that notion, that the words are spoken immediately to them, that makes them seem sweet to them, and they own the things which these Scriptures say to them, for excellent things and wonderful things. As for instance supposing these were the words which were suddenly brought to their minds, *Fear not, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom*; they having confidently taken up a notion that the words were as it were immediately spoken from heaven to them, as an immediate revelation that God was their Father, and had given the kingdom to them, they are greatly affected by it, and the words seem sweet to them; and oh, they say, "they are excellent things that are contained in those words!" But the reason why the promise seems excellent to them, is only because they think it is made to them immediately; all the sense they have of any glory in them, is only from self-love, and from their own imagined interest in the words; not that they had any view or sense of the holy and glorious nature of the kingdom of heaven and the spiritual glory of that God who gives it, and of his excellent grace to sinful men, in offering and giving them this kingdom, of his own good pleasure preceding their imagined interest in these things, and their being affected by them, and being the foundation of their affection, and hope of an interest in them. On the contrary, they first imagine they are interested, and then are highly affected with that, and then can own these things to be excellent. So that the sudden and extraordinary way of the Scripture's coming to their mind is plainly the first foundation of the whole; which is a clear evidence of the wretched delusion they are under.

The first comfort of many persons, and what they call their conversion, is after this manner: after awakening and terror, some comfortable sweet promise comes suddenly and wonderfully to their minds; and the manner of its coming makes them conclude it comes from God to them; and this is the very thing that is all the foundation of their faith, and hope, and comfort: from hence they take their first encouragement to trust in God and in Christ, because they think that God, by some Scripture so brought, has now already revealed to them that he loves them, and has already promised them eternal life, which is very absurd; for every one of common knowledge of the principles of religion, knows that it is God's manner to reveal his love to men, and their interest in the promises, after they have believed, and not before, because they must first believe before they have any interest in the promises to be revealed. The Spirit of God is a Spirit of truth and not of lies: he does not bring Scriptures to men's minds, to reveal to them that they have an interest in God's favor and promises, when they have none, having not yet believed: which would be the case, if God's bringing texts of Scripture to men's minds, to reveal to them that their sins were forgiven, or that it was God's pleasure to give them the kingdom, or any thing of that nature, went before, and was the foundation of their first faith. No promise of the covenant of grace belongs to any man, until he has first believed in Christ; for it is by faith alone that we become interested in Christ, and the promises of the new covenant made in him: and therefore whatever spirit applies the promises of that covenant to a person who has not first believed, as being already his, must be a lying spirit, and that faith which is first built on such an application of promises is built upon a lie. God's manner is not to

bring comfortable texts of Scripture to give men assurance of his love, and that they shall be happy, before they have had a faith of dependence.* And if the Scripture which comes to a person's mind, be not so properly a promise, as an invitation; yet if he makes the sudden or unusual manner of the invitation's coming to his mind, the ground on which he believes that he is invited, it is not true faith; because it is built on that which is not the true ground of faith. True faith is built on no precarious foundation: but a determination that the words of such a particular text were, by the immediate power of God, suggested to the mind, at such a time, as though then spoken and directed by God to him, because the words came after such a manner, is wholly an uncertain and precarious determination, as has been now shown; and therefore is a false and sandy foundation for faith; and accordingly that faith which is built upon it is false. The only certain foundation which any person has to believe that he is invited to partake of the blessings of the gospel, is, that the word of God declares that persons so qualified as he is, are invited, and God who declares it, is true, and cannot lie. If a sinner be once convinced of the veracity of God, and that the Scriptures are his word, he will need no more to convince and satisfy him that he is invited; for the Scriptures are full of invitations to sinners, to the chief of sinners, to come and partake of the benefits of the gospel; he will not want any new speaking of God to him; what he hath spoken already will be enough with him.

As the first comfort of many persons, and their affections at the time of their supposed conversion, are built on such grounds as these which have been mentioned; so are their joys and hopes and other affections, from time to time afterwards. They have often particular words of Scripture, sweet declarations and promises suggested to them, which by reason of the manner of their coming, they think are immediately sent from God to them, at that time, which they look upon as their warrant to take them, and which they actually make the main ground of their appropriating them to themselves, and of the comfort they take in them, and the confidence they receive from them. Thus they imagine a kind of conversation is carried on between God and them; and that God, from time to time, does, as it were, immediately speak to them, and satisfy their doubts,

* Mr. Stoddard in his *Guide to Christ*, p. 8, says, that "sometimes men, after they have been in trouble a while, have some promises come to them, with a great deal of refreshing; and they hope God has accepted them:" and says that, "In this case, the minister may tell them, that God never gives a faith of assurance, before he gives a faith of dependence; for he never manifests his love, until men are in a state of favor and reconciliation, which is by faith of dependence. When men have comfortable Scriptures come to them, they are apt to take them as tokens of God's love: but men must be brought into Christ, by accepting the offer of the gospel, before they are fit for such manifestations. God's method is, first to make the soul accept of the offers of grace, and then to manifest his good estate unto him." And p. 76, speaking of them "that seem to be brought to lie at God's foot, and give an account of their closing with Christ, and that God has revealed Christ to them, and drawn their hearts to him, and they do accept of Christ," he says: "In this case, it is best to examine whether by that light that was given him, he saw Christ and salvation offered to him, or whether he saw that God loved him, or pardoned him: for the offer of grace and our acceptance goes before pardon, and therefore, much more before the knowledge of it."

Mr. Shepard, in his *Parable of the Ten Virgins*, Part II. p. 15, says, that "Grace and the love of Christ (the fairest colors under the sun) may be pretended; but if you shall receive, under this appearance, that God witnesseth his love, first by an absolute promise, take heed there; for under this appearance you may as well bring in immediate revelations, and from thence come to forsake the Scriptures."

And in Part I. p. 86, he says, "Is Christ yours? Yes, I see it. How? By any word or promise? No; this is delusion." And p. 136, speaking of them that have no solid ground of peace, he reckons "those that content themselves with the revelation of the Lord's love without the sight of any work, or not looking to it." And says presently after, "The testimony of the Spirit does not make a man more a Christian, but only evidenceth it; as it is the nature of a witness not to make a thing to be true, but to clear and evidence it." And p. 140, speaking of them that say they have the witness of the Spirit, that makes a difference between them and hypocrites, he says, "the witness of the Spirit makes not the first difference: for first a man is a believer, and in Christ, and justified, called and sanctified, before the Spirit does witness it; else the Spirit should witness to an untruth and lie."

and testifies his love to them, and promises them supports and supplies, and his blessing in such and such cases, and reveals to them clearly their interest in eternal blessings. And thus they are often elevated, and have a course of a sudden and tumultuous kind of joys, mingled with a strong confidence, and high opinion of themselves; when indeed the main ground of these joys, and this confidence, is not any thing contained in, or taught by these Scriptures, as they lie in the Bible, but the manner of their coming to them; which is a certain evidence of their delusion. There is no particular promise in the word of God that is the saint's, or is any otherwise made to him, or spoken to him, than all the promises of the covenant of grace are his, and are made to him and spoken to him;* though it be true that some of these promises may be more peculiarly adapted to his case than others, and God by his Spirit may enable him better to understand some than others, and to have a greater sense of the preciousness, and glory, and suitableness of the blessings contained in them.

But here some may be ready to say, What, is there no such thing as any particular spiritual application of the promises of Scripture by the Spirit of God? I answer, there is doubtless such a thing as a spiritual and saving application of the invitations and promises of Scripture to the souls of men; but it is also certain, that the nature of it is wholly misunderstood by many persons, to the great ensnaring of their own souls, and the giving Satan a vast advantage against them, and against the interest of religion, and the church of God. The spiritual application of a Scripture promise does not consist in its being immediately suggested to the thoughts by some extrinsic agent, and being borne into the mind with this strong apprehension, that it is particularly spoken and directed to them at that time; there is nothing of the evidence of the hand of God in this effect, as events have proved, in many notorious instances; and it is a mean notion of a spiritual application of Scripture; there is nothing in the nature of it at all beyond the power of the devil, if he be not restrained by God; for there is nothing in the nature of the effect that is spiritual, implying any vital communication of God. A truly spiritual application of the word of God is of a vastly higher nature; as much above the devil's power, as it is, so to apply the word of God to a dead corpse, as to raise it to life; or to a stone, to turn it into an angel. A spiritual application of the word of God consists in applying it to the heart, in spiritually enlightening, sanctifying influences. A spiritual application of an invitation or offer of the gospel consists, in giving the soul a spiritual sense or relish of the holy and divine blessings offered, and the sweet and wonderful grace of the offerer, in making so gracious an offer, and of his holy excellency and faithfulness to fulfil what he offers, and his glorious sufficiency for it; so leading and drawing forth the heart to embrace the offer; and thus giving the man evidence of his title to the thing offered. And so a spiritual application of the promises of Scripture, for the comfort of the saints, consists in enlightening their minds to see the holy excellency and sweetness of the blessings promised, and also the holy excellency of the promiser, and his faithfulness and sufficiency; thus drawing forth their hearts to embrace

* Mr. Shepard, in his Sound Believer, p. 159, of the late impression at Boston, says, "Embrace in thy bosom, not only some few promises, but all." And then he asks the question, "When may a Christian take a promise without presumption, as spoken to him?" He answers, "The rule is very sweet, but certain; when he takes all the Scripture, and embraces it as spoken unto him, he may then take any particular promise boldly. My meaning is, when a Christian takes hold, and wrestles with God for the accomplishment of all the promises of the New Testament, when he sets all the commands before him, as a compass and guide to walk after, when he applies all the threatenings to drive him nearer unto Christ, the end of them. This no hypocrite can do; this the saints shall do; and by this they may know when the Lord speaks in particular unto them."

the promiser, and thing promised; and by this means, giving the sensible actings of grace, enabling them to see their grace, and so their title to the promise. An application not consisting in this divine sense and enlightening of the mind, but consisting only in the word's being borne into the thoughts, as if immediately then spoken, so making persons believe, on no other foundation, that the promise is theirs, is a blind application, and belongs to the spirit of darkness, and not of light.

When persons have their affections raised after this manner, those affections are really not raised by the word of God; the Scripture is not the foundation of them; it is not any thing contained in those Scriptures which come to their minds, that raise their affections; but truly that effect, viz., the strange manner of the word's being suggested to their minds, and a proposition from thence taken up by them, which indeed is not contained in that Scripture, nor any other; as that his sins are forgiven him, or that it is the Father's good pleasure to give him in particular the kingdom, or the like. There are propositions to be found in the Bible, declaring that persons of such and such qualifications are forgiven and beloved of God: but there are no propositions to be found in the Bible, declaring that such and such particular persons, independent on any previous knowledge of any qualifications, are forgiven and beloved of God: and therefore, when any person is comforted, and affected by any such proposition, it is by another word, a word newly coined, and not any word of God contained in the Bible.* And thus many persons are vainly affected and deluded.

Again, it plainly appears from what has been demonstrated, that no revelation of secret facts by immediate suggestion, is any thing spiritual and divine, in that sense wherein gracious effects and operations are so.

By secret facts, I mean things that have been done, or are come to pass, or shall hereafter come to pass, which are secret in that sense that they do not appear to the senses, nor are known by any argumentation, or any evidence to reason, nor any other way, but only by that revelation by immediate suggestion of the ideas of them to the mind. Thus for instance, if it should be revealed to me, that the next year this land would be invaded by a fleet from France, or that such and such persons would then be converted, or that I myself should then be converted; not by enabling me to argue out these events from any thing which now appears in providence, but immediately suggesting and bearing in upon my mind, in an extraordinary manner, the apprehension or ideas of these facts, with a strong suggestion or impression on my mind, that I had no hand in myself, that these things would come to pass: or if it should be revealed to me, that this day there is a battle fought between the armies of such and such powers in Europe; or that such a prince in Europe was this day converted, or is now in a converted state, having been converted formerly, or that one of my neighbors is converted, or that I myself am converted; not by having any other evidence of any of these facts, from whence I argue them, but an immediate extraordinary suggestion or excitation of these ideas, and a strong impression of them upon my mind: this is a revelation of secret facts by immediate suggestion, as much as if the facts were future; for the facts being past, present, or

* "Some Christians have rested with a work without Christ, which is abominable: but after a man is in Christ, not to judge by the work, is first not to judge from a word. For though there is a word, which may give a man a dependence on Christ, without feeling any work, nay when he feels none as absolute promises; yet no word giving assurance, but that which is made to some work, he that believeth, or is poor in spirit, &c., until that work is seen, has no assurance from that promise." *Shepard's Parable of the Ten Virgins*, Part I. p. 86.

"If God should tell a saint that he has grace, he might know it by believing the word of God: but it is not in this way that godly men do know that they have grace: it is not revealed in the word, and the Spirit of God doth not testify it to particular persons." *Stoddard's Nature of Saving Conversion*, p. 84, 85.

future, alters not the case, as long as they are secret and hidden from my senses and reason, and not spoken of in Scripture, nor known by me any other way than by immediate suggestion. If I have it revealed to me, that such a revolution is come to pass this day in the Ottoman Empire, it is the very same sort of revelation, as if it were revealed to me that such a revolution would come to pass there this day come twelvemonth; because, though one is present and the other future, yet both are equally hidden from me, any other way than by immediate revelation. When Samuel told Saul that the asses which he went to seek were found, and that his father had left caring for the asses and sorrowed for him; this was by the same kind of revelation, as that by which he told Saul, that in the plain of Tabor there should meet him three men going up to God to Bethel (1 Sam. x. 2, 3), though one of these things was future, and the other was not. So when Elisha told the king of Israel the words that the king of Syria spake in his bed-chamber, it was by the same kind of revelation with that by which he foretold many things to come.

It is evident that this revelation of secret facts by immediate suggestions, has nothing of the nature of a spiritual and divine operation, in the sense forementioned; there is nothing at all in the nature of the perceptions or ideas themselves, which are excited in the mind, that is divinely excellent, and so, far above all the ideas of natural men; though the manner of exciting the ideas be extraordinary. In those things which are spiritual, as has been shown, not only the manner of producing the effect, but the effect wrought is divine, and so vastly above all that can be in an unsanctified mind. Now simply the having an idea of facts, setting aside the manner of producing those ideas, is nothing beyond what the minds of wicked men are susceptible of, without any goodness in them; and they all, either have or will have, the knowledge of the truth of the greatest and most important facts, that have been, are, or shall be.

And as to the extraordinary manner of producing the ideas or perception of facts, even by immediate suggestion, there is nothing in it, but what the minds of natural men, while they are yet natural men, are capable of, as is manifest in Balaam, and others spoken of in the Scripture. And therefore it appears that there is nothing appertaining to this immediate suggestion of secret facts that is spiritual, in the sense in which it has been proved that gracious operations are so. If there be nothing in the ideas themselves, which is holy and divine, and so nothing but what may be in a mind not sanctified, then God can put them into the mind by immediate power without sanctifying it. As there is nothing in the idea of a rainbow itself, that is of a holy and divine nature; so that nothing hinders but that an unsanctified mind may receive that idea; so God, if he pleases, and when he pleases, immediately, and in an extraordinary manner, may excite that idea in an unsanctified mind. So also, as there is nothing in the idea or knowledge that such and such particular persons are forgiven and accepted of God, and entitled to heaven, but what unsanctified minds may have and will have concerning many at the day of judgment; so God can, if he pleases, extraordinarily and immediately, suggest this to, and impress it upon an unsanctified mind now: there is no principle wanting in an unsanctified mind, to make it capable of such a suggestion or impression, nor is there any thing in it to exclude, or necessarily to prevent such a suggestion.

And if these suggestions of secret facts be attended with texts of Scripture, immediately and extraordinarily brought to mind, about some other facts that seem in some respects similar, that does not make the operation to be of a spiritual and divine nature. For that suggestion of words of Scripture is no more divine, than the suggestion of the facts themselves; as has been just now de-

monstrated: and two effects together, which are neither of them spiritual, cannot make up one complex effect, that is spiritual.

Hence it follows, from what has been already shown, and often repeated, that those affections which are properly founded on such immediate suggestions, or supposed suggestions, of secret facts, are not gracious affections. Not but that it is possible that such suggestions may be the occasion, or accidental cause of gracious affections; for so may a mistake and delusion; but it is never properly the foundation of gracious affections: for gracious affections, as has been shown, are all the effects of an influence and operation which is spiritual, supernatural, and divine. But there are many affections, and high affections, which some have, that have such kind of suggestions or revelations for their very foundation: they look upon these as spiritual discoveries, which is a gross delusion, and this delusion is truly the spring whence their affections flow.

Here it may be proper to observe, that it is exceedingly manifest from what has been said, that what many persons call the witness of the Spirit, that they are the children of God, has nothing in it spiritual and divine; and consequently that the affections built upon it are vain and delusive. That which many call the witness of the Spirit, is no other than an immediate suggestion and impression of that fact, otherwise secret, that they are converted, or made the children of God, and so that their sins are pardoned, and that God has given them a title to heaven. This kind of knowledge, viz., knowing that a certain person is converted, and delivered from hell, and entitled to heaven, is no divine sort of knowledge in itself. This sort of fact, is not that which requires any higher or more divine kind of suggestion, in order to impress it on the mind, than any other fact which Balaam had impressed on his mind. It requires no higher sort of idea or sensation, for a man to have the apprehension of his own conversion impressed upon him, than to have the apprehension of his neighbor's conversion, in like manner impressed: but God, if he pleased, might impress the knowledge of this fact, that he had forgiven his neighbor's sins, and given him a title to heaven, as well as any other fact, without any communication of his holiness: the excellency and importance of the fact, do not at all hinder a natural man's mind being susceptible of an immediate suggestion and impression of it. Balaam had as excellent, and important, and glorious facts as this, immediately impressed on his mind, without any gracious influence; as particularly, the coming of Christ, and his setting up his glorious kingdom, and the blessedness of the spiritual Israel in his peculiar favor, and their happiness living and dying. Yea, Abimelech, king of the Philistines, had God's special favor to a particular person, even Abraham, revealed to him, Gen. xx. 6, 7. So it seems that he revealed to Laban his special favor to Jacob, see Gen. xxxi. 24, and Psal. cv. 15. And if a truly good man should have an immediate revelation or suggestion from God, after the like manner, concerning his favor to his neighbor, or himself; it would be no higher kind of influence; it would be no more than a common sort of influence of God's Spirit; as the gift of prophecy, and all revelation by immediate suggestion is; see 1 Cor. xiii. 2. And though it be true, that it is not possible that a natural man should have that individual suggestion from the Spirit of God, that he is converted, because it is not true; yet that does not arise from the nature of the influence, or because that kind of influence which suggests such excellent facts, is too high for him to be the subject of; but purely from the defect of a fact to be revealed. The influence which immediately suggests this fact, when it is true, is of no different kind from that which immediately suggests other true facts: and so the kind and nature of the influence is not above what is common to natural men, with good men.

But this is a mean, ignoble notion of the witness of the Spirit of God given to his dear children, to suppose that there is nothing in the kind and nature of that influence of the Spirit of God, in imparting this high and glorious benefit, but what is common to natural men, or which men are capable of, and be in the mean time altogether unsanctified and the children of hell; and that therefore the benefit or gift itself has nothing of the holy nature of the Spirit of God in it, nothing of a vital communication of that Spirit. This notion greatly debases that high and most exalted kind of influence and operation of the Spirit, which there is in the true witness of the Spirit.* That which is called the witness of the Spirit, Rom. viii., is elsewhere in the New Testament called the seal of the Spirit, 2 Cor. i. 22, Eph. i. 13, and iv. 13, alluding to the seal of princes, annexed to the instrument, by which they advanced any of their subjects to some high honor and dignity, or peculiar privilege in the kingdom, as a token of their special favor. Which is an evidence that the influence of the Spirit, of the Prince of princes, in sealing his favorites, is far from being of a common kind; and that there is no effect of God's Spirit whatsoever, which is in its nature more divine; nothing more holy, peculiar, inimitable and distinguishing of divinity: as nothing is more royal than the royal seal; nothing more sacred, that belongs to a prince, and more peculiarly denoting what belongs to him; it being the very end and design of it, to be the most peculiar stamp and confirmation of the royal authority, and great note of distinction, whereby that which proceeds from the king, or belongs to him, may be known from every thing else. And therefore undoubtedly the seal of the great King of heaven and earth enstamped on the heart, is something high and holy in its own nature, some excellent communication from the infinite fountain of divine beauty and glory; and not merely a making known a secret fact by revelation or suggestion; which is a sort of influence of the Spirit of God, that the children of the devil have often been the subjects of. The seal of the Spirit is a kind of effect of the Spirit of God on the heart, which natural men, while such, are so far from a capacity of being the subjects of, that they can have no manner of notion or idea of it, agreeable to Rev. ii. 17: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it." There is all reason to suppose that what is here spoken of, is the same mark, evidence, or blessed token of special favor, which is elsewhere called the seal of the Spirit.

What has misled many in their notion of that influence of the Spirit of God we are speaking of, is the word *witness*, its being called the witness of the Spirit. Hence they have taken it, not to be any effect or work of the Spirit upon the heart, giving evidence, from whence men may argue that they are the children of God; but an inward immediate suggestion, as though God inwardly

* The late venerable Stoddard, in his younger time, falling in with the opinion of some others, received this notion of the witness of the Spirit, by way of immediate suggestion; but, in the latter part of his life, when he had more thoroughly weighed things, and had more experience, he entirely rejected it; as appears by his treatise of the Nature of Saving Conversion, p. 84: "The Spirit of God doth not testify to particular persons, that they are godly.—Some think that the Spirit of God doth testify to some; and they ground it on Rom. viii. 16, 'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.' They think the Spirit reveals it by giving an inward testimony to it; and some godly men think they have had experience of it: but they may easily mistake when the Spirit of God doth eminently stir up the spirit of faith, and sheds abroad the love of God in the heart, it is easy to mistake it for a testimony. And that is not the meaning of Paul's words. The Spirit reveals things to us, by opening our eyes to see what is revealed in the word; but the Spirit doth not reveal new truths, not revealed in the word. The Spirit discovers the grace of God in Christ, and thereby draws forth special actings of faith and love, which are evidential; but it doth not work in way of testimony. If God do but help us to receive the revelations in the word, we shall have comfort enough without new revelations."

spoke to the man, and testified to him, and told him that he was his child, by a kind of a secret voice, or impression: not observing the manner in which the word witness, or testimony, is often used in the New Testament, where such terms often signify, not only a mere declaring and asserting a thing to be true, but holding forth evidence from whence a thing may be argued, and proved to be true. Thus Heb. ii. 4, God is said to "bear witness, with signs and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost." Now these miracles, here spoken of, are called God's witness, not because they are of the nature of assertions, but evidences and proofs. So Acts xiv. 3: "Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands." And John v. 36: "But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me." Again, chap. x. 25: "The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me." So the water and the blood are said to bear witness, 1 John v. 8, not that they spoke or asserted any thing, but they were proofs and evidences. So God's works of providence, in the rain and fruitful seasons, are spoken of as witnesses of God's being and goodness, i. e., they are evidences of these things. And when the Scripture speaks of the seal of the Spirit, it is an expression which properly denotes, not an immediate voice or suggestion, but some work or effect of the Spirit, that is left as a divine mark upon the soul, to be an evidence by which God's children might be known. The seals of princes were the distinguishing marks of princes: and thus God's seal is spoken of as God's mark, Rev. vii. 3: "Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads;" together with Ezek. ix. 4, "Set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that are done in the midst thereof." When God sets his seal on a man's heart by his Spirit, there is some holy stamp, some image impressed and left upon the heart by the Spirit, as by the seal upon the wax. And this holy stamp, or impressed image, exhibiting clear evidence to the conscience, that the subject of it is the child of God, is the very thing which in Scripture is called the seal of the Spirit, and the witness, or evidence of the Spirit. And this image enstamped by the Spirit on God's children's hearts, is his own image; that is the evidence by which they are known to be God's children, that they have the image of their Father stamped upon their hearts by the Spirit of adoption. Seals anciently had engraven on them two things, viz., the image and the name of the person whose seal it was. Therefore when Christ says to his spouse, Cant. viii. 6, "Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm;" it is as much as to say, let my name and image remain impressed there. The seals of princes were wont to bear their image; so that what they set their seal and royal mark upon, had their image left on it. It was the manner of princes of old to have their image engraven on their jewels and precious stones; and the image of Augustus engraven on a precious stone, was used as the seal of the Roman emperors, in Christ's and the Apostle's times.* And the saints are the jewels of Jesus Christ, the great potentate, who has the possession of the empire of the universe; and these jewels have his image enstamped upon them, by his royal signet, which is the Holy Spirit. And this is undoubtedly what the Scripture means by the seal of the Spirit; especially when it is stamped in so fair and clear a manner, as to be plain to the eye of conscience; which is what the

* See Chambers' Dictionary, under the word ENGRAVING.

Scripture calls our spirit. This is truly an effect that is spiritual, supernatural and divine. This is in itself of a holy nature, being a communication of the divine nature and beauty. That kind of influence of the Spirit which gives and leaves this stamp upon the heart, is such that no natural man can be the subject of any thing of the like nature with it. This is the highest sort of witness of the Spirit, which it is possible the soul should be the subject of: if there were any such thing as a witness of the Spirit by immediate suggestion or revelation, this would be vastly more noble and excellent, and as much above it as the heaven is above the earth. This the devil cannot imitate; as to an inward suggestion of the Spirit of God, by a kind of secret voice speaking, and immediately asserting and revealing a fact, he can do that which is a thousand times so like to this, as he can to that holy and divine effect, or work of the Spirit of God, which has now been spoken of.

Another thing which is a full proof that the seal of the Spirit is no revelation of any fact by immediate suggestion, but is grace itself in the soul, is, that the seal of the Spirit is called in the Scripture, the *earnest of the Spirit*. It is very plain that the seal of the Spirit is the same thing with the earnest of the Spirit, by 2 Cor. i. 22: "Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts;" and Eph. i. 13, 14, 'In whom, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession unto the praise of his glory." Now the earnest is part of the money agreed for, given in hand, as a token of the whole, to be paid in due time; a part of the promised inheritance granted now, in token of full possession of the whole hereafter. But surely that kind of communication of the Spirit of God, which is of the nature of eternal glory, is the highest and most excellent kind of communication, something that is in its own nature spiritual, holy and divine, and far from any thing that is common: and therefore high above any thing of the nature of inspiration, or revelation of hidden facts by suggestion of the Spirit of God, which many natural men have had. What is the earnest, and beginning of glory, but grace itself, especially in the more lively and clear exercises of it? It is not prophecy, nor tongues, nor knowledge, but that more excellent divine thing, "charity that never faileth," which is a prelibation and beginning of the light, sweetness and blessedness of heaven, that world of love or charity. It is grace that is the seed of glory and dawning of glory in the heart, and therefore it is grace that is the earnest of the future inheritance. What is it that is the beginning or earnest of eternal life in the soul, but spiritual life; and what is that but grace? The inheritance that Christ has purchased for the elect, is the Spirit of God; not in any extraordinary gifts, but in his vital indwelling in the heart, exerting and communicating himself there, in his own proper, holy, or divine nature; and this is the sum total of the inheritance that Christ purchased for the elect. For so are things constituted in the affair of our redemption, that the Father provides the Saviour or purchaser, and the purchase is made of him; and the Son is the purchaser and the price; and the Holy Spirit is the great blessing or inheritance purchased, as is intimated, Gal. iii. 13, 14; and hence the Spirit often is spoken of as the sum of the blessings promised in the gospel, Luke xxiv. 49, Acts i. 4, and chap. ii. 38, 39, Gal. iii. 14, Eph. i. 13. This inheritance was the grand legacy which Christ left his disciples and church, in his last will and testament, John chap. xiv., xv., xvi. This is the sum of the blessings of eternal life, which shall be given in heaven. (Compare John vii. 37, 38, 39, and John iv. 14, with Rev. xxi. 6, and xxii. 1, 17.) It is through the vital communications and indwelling of the Spirit that the saints have all their light,

life, holiness, beauty, and joy in heaven; and it is through the vital communications and indwelling of the same Spirit that the saints have all light, life, holiness, beauty and comfort on earth; but only communicated in less measure. And this vital indwelling of the Spirit in the saints, in this less measure and small beginning, is, "the earnest of the Spirit, the earnest of the future inheritance, and the first fruits of the Spirit," as the apostle calls it, Rom. viii. 22, where, by "the first fruits of the Spirit," the apostle undoubtedly means the same vital, gracious principle that he speaks of in all the preceding part of the chapter, which he calls Spirit, and sets in opposition to flesh or corruption.—Therefore this earnest of the Spirit, and first fruits of the Spirit, which has been shown to be the same with the seal of the Spirit, is the vital, gracious, sanctifying communication and influence of the Spirit, and not any immediate suggestion or revelation of facts by the Spirit.*

And indeed the apostle, when in that, Rom. viii. 16, he speaks of the Spirit's bearing witness with our spirit that we are the children of God, does sufficiently explain himself, if his words were but attended to. What is here expressed is connected with the two preceding verses, as resulting from what the apostle had said there, as every reader may see. The three verses together are thus: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God: for ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father: the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God." Here, what the apostle says, if we take it together, plainly shows that what he has respect to, when he speaks of the Spirit's giving us witness or evidence that we are God's children, is his dwelling in us, and leading us, as a spirit of adoption, or spirit of a child, disposing us to behave towards God as to a Father. This is the witness or evidence which the apostle speaks of that we are children, that we have the spirit of children, or spirit of adoption. And what is that but the spirit of love? There are two kinds of spirits the apostle speaks of, the spirit of a slave, or the spirit of bondage, that is fear; and the spirit of a child, or spirit of adoption, and that is love. The apostle says, we have not received the spirit of bondage, or of slaves, which is a spirit of fear; but we have received the more ingenuous noble spirit of children, a spirit of love, which naturally disposes us to go to God as children to a father, and behave towards God as children. And this is the evidence or witness which the Spirit of God gives us that we are his children. This is the plain sense of the apostle; and so undoubtedly he here is speaking of the very same way of casting out doubting and fear and the spirit of bondage, which the Apostle John speaks of, 1 John iv. 18, viz., by the prevailing of love, that is the spirit of a child. The spirit of bondage works by fear, the slave fears the rod: but love cries, Abba, Father; it disposes us to go to God, and behave ourselves towards God as children; and it gives us clear evidence of our union to God as his children, and so casts out fear. So that it appears that the witness of the Spirit the apostle speaks of, is far from being any whisper, or immediate suggestion or revelation; but that gracious holy effect of the Spirit of God in the hearts of the saints, the disposition and temper of children, appearing in sweet childlike love to God, which casts out fear, or a spirit of a slave.

* "After a man is in Christ, not to judge by the work, is not to judge by the Spirit. For the apostle makes the earnest of the Spirit to be the seal.—Now earnest is part of the money bargained for; the beginning of heaven, of the light and life of it. He that sees not that the Lord is his by that, sees no God of his at all. Oh, therefore, do not look for a Spirit, without a word to reveal, nor a word to reveal, without seeing and feeling of some work first. I thank the Lord, I do but pity those that think otherwise. If a sheep of Christ, Oh, wonder not." *Shepard's Par.* Part I. p. 26.

And the same thing is evident from all the context: it is plain the apostle speaks of the Spirit, over and over again, as dwelling in the hearts of the saints, as a gracious principle, set in opposition to the flesh or corruption: and so he does in the words that immediately introduce this passage we are upon, ver. 13, "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the flesh, ye shall live."

Indeed it is past doubt with me, that the apostle has a more special respect to the spirit of grace, or the spirit of love, or spirit of a child, in its more lively actings; for it is perfect love, or strong love only, which so witnesses or evidences that we are children, as to cast out fear, and wholly deliver from the spirit of bondage. The strong and lively exercises of a spirit of childlike, evangelical, humble love to God, give clear evidence of the soul's relation to God as his child; which does very greatly and directly satisfy the soul. And though it be far from being true, that the soul in this case, judges only by an immediate witness, without any sign or evidence; for it judges and is assured by the greatest sign and clearest evidence; yet in this case the saint stands in no need of multiplied signs, or any long reasoning upon them. And though the sight of his relative union with God, and his being in his favor, is not without a medium, because he sees it by that medium, viz., his love; yet his sight of the union of his heart to God is immediate: love, the bond of union, is seen intuitively: the saint sees and feels plainly the union between his soul and God; it is so strong and lively, that he cannot doubt of it. And hence he is assured that he is a child. How can he doubt whether he stands in a childlike relation to God, when he plainly sees a childlike union between God and his soul, and hence does boldly, and as it were naturally and necessarily cry, Abba, Father?

And whereas the apostle says, the Spirit bears witness with our spirits; by our spirit here, is meant our conscience, which is called the spirit of man, Prov. xx. 17, "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly." We elsewhere read of the witness of this spirit of ours: 2 Cor. i. 12, "For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience." And 1 John iii. 19, 20, 21: "And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God." When the Apostle Paul speaks of the Spirit of God bearing witness with our spirit, he is not to be understood of two spirits that are two separate, collateral, independent witnesses; but it is by one that we receive the witness of the other: the Spirit of God gives the evidence by infusing and shedding abroad the love of God, the spirit of a child, in the heart, and our spirit, or our conscience, receives and declares this evidence for our rejoicing.

Many have been the mischiefs that have arisen from that false and delusive notion of the witness of the Spirit, that it is a kind of inward voice, suggestion, or declaration from God to man, that he is beloved of him, and pardoned, elected, or the like, sometimes with, and sometimes without a text of Scripture; and many have been the false and vain (though very high) affections that have arisen from hence. And it is to be feared that multitudes of souls have been eternally undone by it. I have therefore insisted the longer on this head. But I proceed now to a second characteristic of gracious affections.

II. The first objective ground of gracious affections, is the transcendently excellent and amiable nature of divine things as they are themselves; and not any conceived relation they bear to self, or self-interest.

I say, that the supremely excellent nature of divine things, is the first, or

primary and original objective foundation of the spiritual affections of true saints; for I do not suppose that all relation which divine things bear to themselves, and their own particular interest, is wholly excluded from all influence in their gracious affections. For this may have, and indeed has, a secondary and consequential influence in those affections that are truly holy and spiritual, as I shall show how by and by.

It was before observed that the affection of love is, as it were, the fountain of all affection; and particularly that Christian love is the fountain of all gracious affections: now the divine excellency and glory of God and Jesus Christ, the word of God, the works of God, and the ways of God, &c., is the primary reason why a true saint loves these things; and not any supposed interest that he has in them, or any conceived benefit that he has received from them, or shall receive from them, or any such imagined relation which they bear to his interest, that self-love can properly be said to be the first foundation of his love to these things.

Some say that all love arises from self-love; and that it is impossible in the nature of things, for any man to have any love to God, or any other being, but that love to himself must be the foundation of it. But I humbly suppose it is for want of consideration that they say so. They argue, that whoever loves God, and so desires his glory or the enjoyment of him, he desires these things as his own happiness; the glory of God, and the beholding and enjoying his perfections are considered as things agreeable to him, tending to make him happy; he places his happiness in them, and desires them as things, which (if they were obtained) would be delightful to him, or would fill him with delight and joy, and so make him happy. And so, they say, it is from self-love, or a desire of his own happiness, that he desires God should be glorified, and desires to behold and enjoy his glorious perfections. But then they ought to consider a little further, and inquire how the man came to place his happiness in God's being glorified, and in contemplating and enjoying God's perfections.—There is no doubt but that after God's glory, and the beholding his perfections, are become so agreeable to him, that he places his highest happiness in these things, then he will desire them, as he desires his own happiness. But how came these things to be so agreeable to him, that he esteems it his highest happiness to glorify God, &c.? Is not this the fruit of love? A man must first love God, or have his heart united to him, before he will esteem God's good his own, and before he will desire the glorifying, and enjoying of God as his happiness. It is not strong arguing, that because after a man has his heart united to God in love, as a fruit of this, he desires his glory and enjoyment, as his own happiness, that therefore a desire of this happiness of his own must needs be the cause and foundation of his love; unless it be a strong arguing, that because a father begat a son, therefore his son certainly begat him. If after a man loves God, and has his heart so united to him, as to look upon God as his chief good, and on God's good as his own, it will be a consequence and fruit of this, that even self-love, or love to his own happiness, will cause him to desire the glorifying and enjoying of God; it will not thence follow, that this very exercise of self-love, went before his love to God, and that his love to God was a consequence and fruit of that. Something else, entirely distinct from self-love, might be the cause of this, viz., a change made in the views of his mind, and relish of his heart; whereby he apprehends a beauty, glory, and supreme good, in God's nature, as it is in itself. This may be the thing that first draws his heart to him, and causes his heart to be united to him, prior to all considerations of his own interest or happiness, although after this, and as a fruit of this, he necessarily seeks his interest and happiness in God.

There is such a thing as a kind of love or affection that a man may have towards persons or things, which does properly arise from self-love; a preconceived relation to himself, or some respect already manifested by another to him, or some benefit already received or depended on, is truly the first foundation of his love, and what his affection does wholly arise from; and is what precedes any relish of, or delight in the nature and qualities inherent in the being beloved, as beautiful and amiable. When the first thing that draws a man's benevolence to another, is the beholding those qualifications and properties in him, which appear to him lovely in themselves; and the subject of them, on this account, worthy of esteem and good will, love arises in a very different manner, than when it first arises from some gift bestowed by another or depended on from him, as a judge loves and favors a man that has bribed him; or from the relation he supposes another has to him, as a man who loves another, because he looks upon him as his child. When love to another arises thus, it does truly and properly arise from self-love.

That kind of affection to God or Jesus Christ, which does thus properly arise from self-love, cannot be a truly gracious and spiritual love, as appears from what has been said already: for self-love is a principle entirely natural, and as much in the hearts of devils as angels; and therefore surely nothing that is the mere result of it can be supernatural and divine, in the manner before described.* Christ plainly speaks of this kind of love, as what is nothing beyond the love of wicked men: Luke vi. 32, "If ye love them that love you, what thank have ye? For sinners also love those that love them." And the devil himself knew that that kind of respect to God which was so mercenary, as to be only for benefits received or depended on (which is all one), is worthless in the sight of God; otherwise he never would have made use of such a slander before God, against Job, as in Job i. 9, 10: "Doth Job serve God for nought? Has not thou made a hedge about him, and about his house," &c. Nor would God ever have implicitly allowed the objection to have been good, in case the accusation had been true, by allowing that that matter should be tried, and that Job should be so dealt with, that it might appear in the event, whether Job's respect to God was thus mercenary or no, and by putting the proof of the sincerity and goodness of his respect upon that issue.

It is unreasonable to think otherwise, than that the first foundation of a true love to God, is that whereby he is in himself lovely, or worthy to be loved, or the supreme loveliness of his nature. This is certainly what makes him chiefly amiable. What chiefly makes a man, or any creature lovely, is his excellency; and so what chiefly renders God lovely, and must undoubtedly be the chief ground of true love, is his excellency. God's nature, or the divinity, is infinitely excellent; yea it is infinite beauty, brightness, and glory itself. But how can that be true love of this excellent and lovely nature, which is not built on the foundation of its true loveliness? How can that be true love of beauty and brightness, which is not for beauty and brightness' sake? How can that be a true prizing of that which is in itself infinitely worthy and precious, which is not for the sake of its worthiness and preciousness? This infinite excellency of the divine nature, as it is in itself, is the true ground of all that is good in God in any respect; but how can a man truly and rightly love God, without loving him for that excellency in him, which is the foundation of all that is in any manner of respect good or desirable in him? They whose affection to God is founded first on his profitableness to them, their affection begins at the

* "There is a natural love to Christ, as to one that doth thee good, and for thine own ends; and spiritual, for himself, whereby the Lord only is exalted." *Shepard's Par. of the Ten Virgins*, Part I. p. 25

wrong end; they regard God only for the utmost limit of the stream of divine good, where it touches them, and reaches their interest; and have no respect to that infinite glory of God's nature, which is the original good, and the true fountain of all good, the first fountain of all loveliness of every kind, and so the first foundation of all true love.

A natural principle of self-love may be the foundation of great affections towards God and Christ, without seeing any thing of the beauty and glory of the divine nature. There is a certain gratitude that is a mere natural thing. Gratitude is one of the natural affections of the soul of man, as well as anger; and there is a gratitude that arises from self-love, very much in the same manner that anger does. Anger in men is an affection excited against another, or in opposition to another, for something in him that crosses self-love: gratitude is an affection one has towards another, for loving him, or gratifying him, or for something in him that suits self-love. And there may be a kind of gratitude, without any true or proper love: as there may be anger without any proper hatred, as in parents towards their children, that they may be angry with, and yet at the same time have a strong habitual love to them. This gratitude is the principle which is an exercise in wicked men, in that which Christ declares concerning them, in the 6th of Luke, where he says, sinners love those that love them; and which he declares concerning even the publicans, who were some of the most carnal and profligate sort of men, Matt. v. 46. This is the very principle that is wrought upon by bribery, in unjust judges; and it is a principle that even the brute beasts do exercise; a dog will love his master that is kind to him. And we see in innumerable instances, that mere nature is sufficient to excite gratitude in men, or to affect their hearts with thankfulness to others for kindnesses received; and sometimes towards them, whom at the same time they have a habitual enmity against. Thus Saul was once and again greatly affected, and even dissolved with gratitude towards David, for sparing his life, and yet remained a habitual enemy to him. And as men, from mere nature, may be thus affected towards men; so they may towards God. There is nothing hinders but that the same self-love may work after the same manner towards God as towards men. And we have manifest instances of it in Scripture; as indeed the children of Israel, who sang God's praises at the Red Sea, but soon forgat God's works: and in Naaman the Syrian, who was greatly affected with the miraculous cure of his leprosy, so as to have his heart engaged thenceforward to worship the God that had healed him, and him only, excepting when it would expose him to be ruined in his temporal interest. So was Nebuchadnezzar greatly affected with God's goodness to him, in restoring him to his reason and kingdom, after his dwelling with the beasts.

Gratitude being thus a natural principle, it renders ingratitude so much the more vile and heinous; because it shows a dreadful prevalence of wickedness, when it even overbears and suppresses the better principles of human nature: as it is mentioned as an evidence of the high degree of the wickedness of many of the heathen, that they were without natural affection, Rom. ii. 31. But that the want of gratitude, or natural affection, is evidence of a high degree of vice, is no argument that all gratitude and natural affection has the nature of virtue, or saving grace.

Self-love, through the exercise of mere natural gratitude, may be the foundation of a sort of love to God many ways. A kind of love may arise from a false notion of God, that men have been educated in, or have some way imbibed; as though he were only goodness and mercy, and not revenging justice; or as though the exercises of his goodness were necessary, and not free and

sovereign; or as though his goodness were dependent on what is in them, and as it were constrained by them. Men on such grounds as these, may love a God of their own forming in their imaginations, when they are far from loving such a God as reigns in heaven.

Again, self-love may be the foundation of an affection in men towards God, through a great insensibility of their state with regard to God, and for want of conviction of conscience to make them sensible how dreadfully they have provoked God to anger; they have no sense of the heinousness of sin, as against God, and of the infinite and terrible opposition of the holy nature of God against it: and so, having formed in their minds such a God as suits them, and thinking God to be such a one as themselves, who favors and agrees with them, they may like him very well, and feel a sort of love to him, when they are far from loving the true God. And men's affections may be much moved towards God, from self-love, by some remarkable outward benefits received from God; as it was with Naaman, Nebuchadnezzar, and the children of Israel at the Red Sea.

Again, a very high affection towards God may, and often does, arise in men, from an opinion of the favor and love of God to them, as the first foundation of their love to him. After awakenings and distress, through fears of hell, they may suddenly get a notion, through some impression on their imagination, or immediate suggestion with or without texts of Scripture, or by some other means, that God loves them, and has forgiven their sins, and made them his children; and this is the first thing that causes their affections to flow towards God and Jesus Christ: and then after this, and upon this foundation, many things in God may appear lovely to them, and Christ may seem excellent. And if such persons are asked, whether God appears lovely and amiable in himself, they would perhaps readily answer, yes; when indeed, if the matter be strictly examined, this good opinion of God was purchased and paid for before ever they afforded it, in the distinguishing and infinite benefits they imagined they received from God: and they allow God to be lovely in himself, no otherwise than that he has forgiven them, and accepted them, and loves them above most in the world, and has engaged to improve all his infinite power and wisdom in preferring, dignifying, and exalting them, and will do for them just as they would have him. When once they are firm in this apprehension, it is easy to own God and Christ to be lovely and glorious, and to admire and extol them. It is easy for them to own Christ to be a lovely person, and the best in the world, when they are first firm in it, that he, though Lord of the universe, is captivated with love to them, and has his heart swallowed up in them, and prizes them far beyond most of their neighbors, and loved them from eternity, and died for them, and will make them reign in eternal glory with him in heaven. When this is the case with carnal men, their very lusts will make him seem lovely: pride itself will prejudice them in favor of that which they call Christ: selfish, proud man naturally calls that lovely that greatly contributes to his interest, and gratifies his ambition.

And as this sort of persons begin, so they go on. Their affections are raised from time to time, primarily on this foundation of self-love and a conceit of God's love to them. Many have a false notion of communion with God, as though it were carried on by impulses, and whispers, and external representations, immediately made to their imagination. These things they often have; which they take to be manifestations of God's great love to them, and evidences of their high exaltation above others of mankind; and so their affections are often renewedly set agoing.

Whereas the exercises of true and holy love in the saints arise in another

way. They do not first see that God loves them, and then see that he is lovely, but they first see that God is lovely, and that Christ is excellent and glorious, and their hearts are first captivated with this view, and the exercises of their love are wont from time to time to begin here, and to arise primarily from these views; and then, consequentially, they see God's love, and great favor to them.* The saint's affections begin with God; and self-love has a hand in these affections consequentially, and secondarily only. On the contrary, those false affections begin with self, and an acknowledgment of an excellency in God, and an affectedness with it, is only consequential and dependent. In the love of the true saint God is the lowest foundation; the love of the excellency of his nature is the foundation of all the affections which come afterwards, wherein self-love is concerned as a handmaid: on the contrary, the hypocrite lays himself at the bottom of all, as the first foundation, and lays on God as the superstructure; and even his acknowledgment of God's glory itself depends on his regard to his private interest.

Self-love may not only influence men, so as to cause them to be affected with God's kindness to them separately; but also with God's kindness to them as parts of a community: as a natural principle of self-love, without any other principle, may be sufficient to make a man concerned for the interest of the nation to which he belongs: as for instance, in the present war, self-love may make natural men rejoice at the successes of our nation, and sorry for their disadvantages, they being concerned as members of the body. So the same natural principle may extend further, and even to the world of mankind, and might be affected with the benefits the inhabitants of the earth have, beyond those of the inhabitants of other planets, if we knew that such there were, and how it was with them. So this principle may cause men to be affected with the benefits that mankind have received beyond the fallen angels. And hence men, from this principle, may be much affected with the wonderful goodness of God to mankind, his great goodness in giving his Son to die for fallen man, and the marvellous love of Christ in suffering such great things for us, and with the great glory they hear God has provided in heaven for us; looking on themselves as persons concerned and interested, as being some of this species of creatures so highly favored: the same principle of natural gratitude may influence men here, as in the case of personal benefits.

But these things that I have said do by no means imply, that all gratitude to God is a mere natural thing, and that there is no such thing as a spiritual gratitude, which is a holy and divine affection: they imply no more, than that there is a gratitude which is merely natural, and that when persons have affections towards God only or primarily for benefits received, their affection is only the exercise of a natural gratitude. There is doubtless such a thing as a gracious gratitude, which does greatly differ from all that gratitude which natural men experience. It differs in the following respects:

1. True gratitude or thankfulness to God for his kindness to us, arises from a foundation laid before, of love to God for what he is in himself; whereas a natural gratitude has no such antecedent foundation. The gracious stirrings of grateful affection to God, for kindness received, always are from a stock of love already in the heart, established in the first place on other grounds, viz., God's own excellency; and hence the affections are disposed to flow out on occasions of God's kindness. The saint, having seen the glory of God, and his heart

* "There is a seeing of Christ after a man believes, which is Christ in his love, &c. But I speak of that first sight of him that precedes the second act of faith; and it is an intuitive, or real sight of him as he is in his glory." *Shepard's Par. of the Ten Virgins*, Part I. p. 74.

being overcome by it, and captivated with love to him on that account, his heart hereby becomes tender, and easily affected with kindnesses received. If a man has no love to another, yet gratitude may be moved by some extraordinary kindness; as in Saul towards David: but this is not the same kind of thing, as a man's gratitude to a dear friend, that his heart was before possessed with a high esteem of, and love to; whose heart by this means became tender towards him, and more easily affected with gratitude, and affected in another manner. Self-love is not excluded from a gracious gratitude; the saints love God for his kindness to them: Psal. cxvi. 1, "I love the Lord, because he hath heard the voice of my supplication." But something else is included; and another love prepares the way, and lays the foundation for these grateful affections.

2. In a gracious gratitude men are affected with the attribute of God's goodness and free grace, not only as they are concerned in it, or as it affects their interest, but as a part of the glory and beauty of God's nature. That wonderful and unparalleled grace of God, which is manifested in the work of redemption, and shines forth in the face of Jesus Christ, is infinitely glorious in itself, and appears so to the angels; it is a great part of the moral perfection and beauty of God's nature. This would be glorious, whether it were exercised towards us or no; and the saint who exercises a gracious thankfulness for it, sees it to be so, and delights in it as such: though his concern in it serves the more to engage his mind and raise the attention and affection; and self-love here assists as a handmaid, being subservient to higher principles, to lead forth the mind to the view and contemplation, and engage and fix the attention, and heighten the joy and love.—God's kindness to them is a glass that God sets before them, wherein to behold the beauty of the attribute of God's goodness: the exercises and displays of this attribute, by this means, are brought near to them, and set right before them. So that in a holy thankfulness to God, the concern our interest has in God's goodness, is not the first foundation of our being affected with it; that was laid in the heart before, in that stock of love which was to God, for his excellency in himself, that makes the heart tender and susceptive of such impressions from his goodness to us. Nor is our own interest, or the benefits we have received, the only, or the chief objective ground of the present exercises of the affection, but God's goodness, as part of the beauty of his nature; although the manifestations of that lovely attribute, set immediately before our eyes, in the exercises of it for us, be the special occasion of the mind's attention to that beauty, at that time, and serves to fix the attention, and heighten the affection.

Some may perhaps be ready to object against the whole that has been said, that text, 1 John iv. 19: "We love him, because he first loved us," as though this implied that God's love to the true saints were the first foundation of their love to him.

In answer to this, I would observe, that the apostle's drift in these words, is to magnify the love of God to us from hence, that he loved us, while we had no love to him; as will be manifest to any one who compares this verse and the two following with the 9th, 10th, and 11th verses. And that God loved us, when we had no love to him, the apostle proves by this argument, that God's love to the elect is the ground of their love to him. And that it is three ways.—1. The saints' love to God is the fruit of God's love to them, as it is the gift of that love. God gave them a spirit of love to him, because he loved them from eternity. And in this respect God's love to his elect is the first foundation of their love to him, as it is the foundation of their regeneration, and the whole of their redemption. 2. The exercises and discoveries that

God has made of his wonderful love to sinful men, by Jesus Christ, in the work of redemption, is one of the chief manifestations, which God has made of the glory of his moral perfection, to both angels and men; and so is one main objective ground of the love of both to God; in a good consistence with what was said before. 3. God's love to a particular elect person, discovered by his conversion, is a great manifestation of God's moral perfection and glory to him, and a proper occasion of the excitation of the love of holy gratitude, agreeable to what was before said. And that the saints do in these respects love God, because he first loved them, fully answers the design of the apostle's argument in that place. So that no good argument can be drawn from hence, against a spiritual and gracious love in the saints, arising primarily from the excellency of divine things, as they are in themselves, and not from any conceived relation they bear to their interest.

And as it is with the love of the saints, so it is with their joy, and spiritual delight and pleasure: the first foundation of it is not any consideration or conception of their interest in divine things; but it primarily consists in the sweet entertainment their minds have in the view or contemplation of the divine and holy beauty of these things, as they are in themselves. And this is indeed the very main difference between the joy of the hypocrite, and the joy of the true saint. The former rejoices in himself; self is the first foundation of his joy: the latter rejoices in God. The hypocrite has his mind pleased and delighted, in the first place, with his own privilege, and the happiness which he supposes he has attained to, or shall attain to. True saints have their minds, in the first place, inexpressibly pleased and delighted with the sweet ideas of the glorious and amiable nature of the things of God. And this is the spring of all their delights, and the cream of all their pleasures: it is the joy of their joy. This sweet and ravishing entertainment they have in the view of the beautiful and delightful nature of divine things, is the foundation of the joy that they have afterwards, in the consideration of their being theirs. But the dependence of the affections of hypocrites is in a contrary order: they first rejoice and are elevated with it, that they are made so much of by God; and then on that ground he seems, in a sort, lovely to them.

The first foundation of the delight a true saint has in God, is his own perfection; and the first foundation of the delight he has in Christ, is his own beauty; he appears in himself the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely. The way of salvation by Christ is a delightful way to him, for the sweet and admirable manifestations of the divine perfections in it: the holy doctrines of the gospel, by which God is exalted and man abased, holiness honored and promoted, and sin greatly disgraced and discouraged, and free and sovereign love manifested, are glorious doctrines in his eyes, and sweet to his taste, prior to any conception of his interest in these things. Indeed the saints rejoice in their interest in God, and that Christ is theirs: and so they have great reason, but this is not the first spring of their joy. They first rejoice in God as glorious and excellent in himself, and then secondarily rejoice in it, that so glorious a God is theirs.—They first have their hearts filled with sweetness, from the view of Christ's excellency, and the excellency of his grace and the beauty of the way of salvation by him, and then they have a secondary joy in that so excellent a Saviour, and such excellent grace are theirs.* But that which is the true saint's superstructure is the hypocrite's foundation. When they hear of the

* Dr. Owen, on the Spirit, p. 199, speaking of a common work of the Spirit, says: "The effects of this work on the mind, which is the first subject affected with it, proceeds not so far as to give delight, complacency and satisfaction, in the lovely spiritual nature and excellency of the things revealed unto it.

wonderful things of the gospel, of God's great love in sending his Son, of Christ's dying love to sinners, and the great things Christ has purchased and promised to the saints, and hear these things livelily and eloquently set forth; they may hear with a great deal of pleasure, and be lifted up with what they hear; but if their joy be examined, it will be found to have no other foundation than this, that they look upon these things as theirs, all this exalts them, they love to hear of the great love of Christ, so vastly distinguishing some from others; for self-love, and even pride itself makes them affect great distinction from others. No wonder, in this confident opinion of their own good estate, that they feel well under such doctrine, and are pleased in the highest degree, in hearing how much God and Christ makes of them. So that their joy is really a joy in themselves, and not in God.

And because the joy of hypocrites is in themselves, hence it comes to pass that in their rejoicings and elevations, they are wont to keep their eye upon themselves: having received what they call spiritual discoveries or experiences, their minds are taken up about them, admiring their own experiences; and what they are principally taken and elevated with, is not the glory of God, or beauty of Christ, but the beauty of their experiences. They keep thinking with themselves, What a good experience is this! What a great discovery is this! What wonderful things have I met with! And so they put their experiences in the place of Christ, and his beauty and fulness; and instead of rejoicing in Christ Jesus, they rejoice in their admirable experiences; instead of feeding and feasting their souls in the view of what is without them, viz., the innate, sweet refreshing amiableness of the things exhibited in the gospel, their eyes are off from these things, or at least they view them only as it were sideways; but the object that fixes their contemplation, is their experience; and they are feeding their souls, and feasting a selfish principle, with a view of their discoveries: they take more comfort in their discoveries than in Christ discovered, which is the true notion of living upon experiences and frames, and not a using experiences as the signs on which they rely for evidence of their good estate, which some call living on experiences; though it be very observable, that some of them who do so are most notorious for living upon experiences, according to the true notion of it.

The affections of hypocrites are very often after this manner; they are first much affected with some impression on their imagination, or some impulse which they take to be an immediate suggestion or testimony from God of his love and their happiness, and high privileges in some respect, either with or without a text of Scripture; they are mightily taken with this as a great discovery, and hence arise high affections. And when their affections are raised, then they view those high affections, and call them great and wonderful experiences; and they have a notion that God is greatly pleased with those affections; and this affects them more; and so they are affected with their affections. And thus their affections rise higher and higher, until they sometimes are perfectly swallowed up: and self-conceit, and a fierce zeal rises withal; and all is built like a castle in the air, on no other foundation but imagination, self-love, and pride.

And as the thoughts of this sort of persons are, so is their talk; for out of the abundance of their heart their mouth speaketh. As in their high affections they keep their eye upon the beauty of their experiences, and greatness of their attainments; so they are great talkers about themselves.—The true saint, when under great spiritual affections, from the fulness of his heart, is ready to be

"The true nature of saving illumination consists in this, that it gives the mind such a direct intuitive insight and prospect into spiritual things, as that in their own spiritual nature they suit, please, and satisfy it; so that it is transformed into them, cast into the mould of them, and rests in them."

speaking much of God, and his glorious perfections and works, and of the beauty and amiableness of Christ, and the glorious things of the gospel: but hypocrites, in their high affections, talk more of the discovery, than they do of the thing discovered; they are full of talk about the great things they have met with, the wonderful discoveries they have had, how sure they are of the love of God to them, how safe their condition is, and how they know they shall go to heaven, &c.

A true saint, when in the enjoyment of true discoveries of the sweet glory of God and Christ, has his mind too much captivated and engaged by what he views without himself, to stand at that time to view himself, and his own attainments: it would be a diversion and loss which he could not bear, to take his eye off from the ravishing object of his contemplation, to survey his own experience, and to spend time in thinking with himself, what a high attainment this is, and what a good story I now have to tell others. Nor does the pleasure and sweetness of his mind at that time chiefly arise from the consideration of the safety of his state, or any thing he has in view of his own qualifications, experiences, or circumstances; but from the divine and supreme beauty of what is the object of his direct view, without himself; which sweetly entertains, and strongly holds his mind.

As the love and joy of hypocrites are all from the source of self-love; so it is with their other affections, their sorrow for sin, their humiliation and submission, their religious desires and zeal: every thing is, as it were, paid for beforehand, in God's highly gratifying their self-love, and their lusts, by making so much of them, and exalting them so highly, as things are in their imagination. It is easy for nature, as corrupt as it is, under a notion of being already some of the highest favorites of heaven, and having a God who does so protect them and favor them in their sins, to love this imaginary God that suits them so well, and to extol him, and submit to him, and to be fierce and zealous for him. The high affections of many are all built on the supposition of their being eminent saints. If that opinion which they have of themselves were taken away, if they thought they were some of the lower form of saints (though they should yet suppose themselves to be real saints), their high affections would fall to the ground. If they only saw a little of the sinfulness and vileness of their own hearts, and their deformity, in the midst of their best duties and their best affections, it would knock their affections on the head; because their affections are built upon self, therefore self-knowledge would destroy them. But as to truly gracious affections, they are built elsewhere; they have their foundation out of self in God and Jesus Christ; and therefore a discovery of themselves, of their own deformity, and the meanness of their experiences, though it will purify their affections, yet it will not destroy them, but in some respects sweeten and heighten them.

III. Those affections that are truly holy, are primarily founded on the loveliness of the moral excellency of divine things. Or (to express it otherwise) a love to divine things for the beauty and sweetness of their moral excellency, is the first beginning and spring of all holy affections.

Here, for the sake of the more illiterate reader, I will explain what I mean by the moral excellency of divine things.

And it may be observed, that the word *moral* is not to be understood here, according to the common and vulgar acceptation of the word, when men speak of morality, and a moral behavior; meaning an outward conformity to the duties of the moral law, and especially the duties of the second table; or intending no more at farthest, than such seeming virtues, as proceed from natural princi-

ples, in opposition to those virtues that are more inward, spiritual, and divine; as the honesty, justice, generosity, good nature, and public spirit of many of the heathen are called moral virtues, in distinction from the holy faith, love, humility, and heavenly-mindedness of true Christians: I say, the word *moral* is not to be understood thus in this place.

But in order to a right understanding what is meant, it must be observed, that divines commonly make a distinction between moral good and evil, and natural good and evil. By moral evil, they mean the evil of sin, or that evil which is against duty, and contrary to what is right and ought to be. By natural evil, they do not mean that evil which is properly opposed to duty; but that which is contrary to mere nature, without any respect to a rule of duty. So the evil of suffering is called natural evil, such as pain and torment, disgrace, and the like: these things are contrary to mere nature, contrary to the nature of both bad and good, hateful to wicked men and devils, as well as good men and angels. So likewise natural defects are called natural evils, as if a child be monstrous, or a natural fool; these are natural evils, but are not moral evils, because they have not properly the nature of the evil of sin. On the other hand, as by moral evil, divines mean the evil of sin, or that which is contrary to what is right; so by moral good, they mean that which is contrary to sin, or that good in beings who have will and choice, whereby, as voluntary agents, they are, and act, as it becomes them to be and to act, or so as is most fit, and suitable, and lovely. By natural good, they mean that good that is entirely of a different kind from holiness or virtue, viz., that which perfects or suits nature, considering nature abstractly from any holy or unholy qualifications, and without any relation to any rule or measure of right and wrong.

Thus pleasure is a natural good; so is honor, so is strength; so is speculative knowledge, human learning, and policy.—Thus there is a distinction to be made between the natural good that men are possessed of, and their moral good; and also between the natural and moral good of the angels in heaven: the great capacity of their understandings, and their great strength, and the honorable circumstances they are in as the great ministers of God's kingdom, whence they are called thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, is the natural good which they are possessed of; but their perfect and glorious holiness and goodness, their pure and flaming love to God, and to the saints and to one another, is their moral good. So divines make a distinction between the natural and moral perfections of God: by the moral perfections of God, they mean those attributes which God exercises as a moral agent, or whereby the heart and will of God are good, right, and infinitely becoming and lovely; such as his righteousness, truth, faithfulness, and goodness; or, in one word, his holiness. By God's natural attributes or perfections, they mean those attributes, wherein, according to our way of conceiving of God, consists, not the holiness or moral goodness of God, but his greatness; such as his power, his knowledge, whereby he knows all things, and his being eternal, from everlasting to everlasting, his omnipresence, and his awful and terrible majesty.

The moral excellency of an intelligent voluntary being is more immediately seated in the heart or will of moral agents. That intelligent being, whose will is truly right and lovely, is morally good or excellent.

This moral excellency of an intelligent being, when it is true and real, and not only external, or merely seeming and counterfeit, is holiness. Therefore holiness comprehends all the true moral excellency of intelligent beings: there is no other true virtue, but real holiness. Holiness comprehends all the true virtue of a good man, his love to God, his gracious love to men, his justice, his

charity, and bowels of mercies, his gracious meekness and gentleness, and all other true Christian virtues that he has, belong to his holiness. So the holiness of God in the more extensive sense of the word, and the sense in which the word is commonly, if not universally used concerning God in Scripture, is the same with the moral excellency of the divine nature, or his purity and beauty as a moral agent, comprehending all his moral perfections, his righteousness, faithfulness, and goodness. As in holy men, their charity, Christian kindness and mercy, belong to their holiness; so the kindness and mercy of God belong to his holiness. Holiness in man is but the image of God's holiness; there are not more virtues belonging to the image than are in the original: derived holiness has not more in it than is in that underived holiness which is its fountain: there is no more than grace for grace, or grace in the image, answerable to grace in the original.

As there are two kinds of attributes in God, according to our way of conceiving of him, his moral attributes, which are summed up in his holiness, and his natural attributes of strength, knowledge, &c., that constitute the greatness of God; so there is a twofold image of God in man, his moral or spiritual image, which is his holiness, that is the image of God's moral excellency (which image was lost by the fall), and God's natural image, consisting in man's reason and understanding, his natural ability, and dominion over the creatures, which is the image of God's natural attribute.

From what has been said, it may easily be understood what I intend, when I say that a love to divine things for the beauty of their moral excellency, is the beginning and spring of all holy affections. It has been already shown, under the former head, that the first objective ground of all holy affections is the supreme excellency of divine things as they are in themselves, or in their own nature; I now proceed further, and say more particularly, that that kind of excellency of the nature of divine things, which is the first objective ground of all holy affections, is their moral excellency, or their holiness. Holy persons, in the exercise of holy affections, do love divine things primarily for their holiness: they love God, in the first place, for the beauty of his holiness or moral perfection, as being supremely amiable in itself. Not that the saints, in the exercise of gracious affections, do love God only for his holiness; all his attributes are amiable and glorious in their eyes; they delight in every divine perfection; the contemplation of the infinite greatness, power, and knowledge, and terrible majesty of God, is pleasant to them. But their love to God for his holiness is what is most fundamental and essential in their love. Here it is that true love to God begins; all other holy love to divine things flows from hence: this is the most essential and distinguishing thing that belongs to a holy love to God, with regard to the foundation of it. A love to God for the beauty of his moral attributes, leads to, and necessarily causes a delight in God for all his attributes; for his moral attributes cannot be without his natural attributes: for infinite holiness supposes infinite wisdom, and an infinite capacity and greatness; and all the attributes of God do as it were imply one another.

The true beauty and loveliness of all intelligent beings does primarily and most essentially consist in their moral excellency or holiness. Herein consists the loveliness of the angels, without which, with all their natural perfections, their strength, and their knowledge, they would have no more loveliness than devils. It is a moral excellency alone, that is in itself, and on its own account, the excellency of intelligent beings: it is this that gives beauty to, or rather is the beauty of their natural perfections and qualifications. Moral excellency is the excellency of natural excellencies. Natural qualifications are either excel

lent or otherwise, according as they are joined with moral excellency or not. Strength and knowledge do not render any being lovely, without holiness, but more hateful; though they render them more lovely, when joined with holiness. Thus the elect angels are the more glorious for their strength and knowledge, because these natural perfections of theirs are sanctified by their moral perfection. But though the devils are very strong, and of great natural understanding, they be not the more lovely: they are more terrible indeed, but not the more amiable; but on the contrary, the more hateful. The holiness of an intelligent creature, is the beauty of all his natural perfections. And so it is in God, according to our way of conceiving of the divine Being: holiness is in a peculiar manner the beauty of the divine nature. Hence we often read of the beauty of holiness, Psal. xxix. 2, Psal. xcvi. 9, and cx. 3. This renders all his other attributes glorious and lovely. It is the glory of God's wisdom, that it is a holy wisdom, and not a wicked subtilty and craftiness. This makes his majesty lovely; and not merely dreadful and horrible, that it is a holy majesty. It is the glory of God's immutability, that it is a holy immutability, and not an inflexible obstinacy in wickedness.

And therefore it must needs be, that a sight of God's loveliness must begin here. A true love to God must begin with a delight in his holiness, and not with a delight in any other attribute; for no other attribute is truly lovely without this, and no otherwise than as (according to our way of conceiving of God) it derives its loveliness from this; and therefore it is impossible that other attributes should appear lovely, in their true loveliness, until this is seen; and it is impossible that any perfection of the divine nature should be loved with true love until this is loved. If the true loveliness of all God's perfections arises from the loveliness of his holiness; then the true love of all his perfections arises from the love of his holiness. They that do not see the glory of God's holiness, cannot see any thing of the true glory of his mercy and grace: they see nothing of the glory of those attributes, as any excellency of God's nature, as it is in itself; though they may be affected with them, and love them, as they concern their interest: for these attributes are no part of the excellency of God's nature, as that is excellent in itself, any otherwise than as they are included in his holiness, more largely taken; or as they are a part of his moral perfection.

As the beauty of the divine nature does primarily consist in God's holiness, so does the beauty of all divine things. Herein consists the beauty of the saints, that they are saints, or holy ones; it is the moral image of God in them, which is their beauty; and that is their holiness. Herein consists the beauty and brightness of the angels of heaven, that they are holy angels, and so not devils. Dan. iv. 13, 17, 23, Matt. xxv. 31, Mark viii. 38, Acts x. 22, Rev. xiv. 10. Herein consists the beauty of the Christian religion, above all other religions, that it is so holy a religion. Herein consists the excellency of the word of God, that it is so holy: Psal. cxix. 140, "Thy word is very pure, therefore thy servant loveth it." Ver. 128, "I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way." Ver. 138, "Thy testimonies that thou hast commanded are righteous, and very faithful." And 172, "My tongue shall speak of thy word; for all thy commandments are righteousness." And Psal. xix. 7—10, "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever: the judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey, and the

honey comb." Herein does primarily consist the amiableness and beauty of the Lord Jesus, whereby he is the chief among ten thousands, and altogether lovely, even in that he is the holy one of God, Acts iii. 14, and God's holy child, Acts iv. 27, and he that is holy, and he that is true, Rev. iii. 7. All the spiritual beauty of his human nature, consisting in his meekness, lowliness, patience, heavenliness, love to God, love to men, condescension to the mean and vile, and compassion to the miserable, &c., all is summed up in his holiness. And the beauty of his divine nature, of which the beauty of his human nature is the image and reflection, does also primarily consist in his holiness. Herein primarily consists the glory of the gospel, that it is a holy gospel, and so bright an emanation of the holy beauty of God and Jesus Christ: herein consists the spiritual beauty of its doctrines, that they are holy doctrines, or doctrines according to goodness. And herein does consist the spiritual beauty of the way of salvation by Jesus Christ, that it is so holy a way. And herein chiefly consists the glory of heaven, that it is the holy city, the holy Jerusalem, the habitation of God's holiness, and so of his glory, Isa. lxiii. 15. All the beauties of the new Jerusalem, as it is described in the two last chapters of Revelation, are but various representations of this. See chap. xxi. 2, 10, 11, 18, 21, 27, chap. xxii. 1, 3.

And therefore it is primarily on account of this kind of excellency, that the saints do love all these things. Thus they love the word of God, because it is very pure. It is on this account they love the saints; and on this account chiefly it is, that heaven is lovely to them, and those holy tabernacles of God amiable in their eyes: it is on this account that they love God; and on this account primarily it is, that they love Christ, and that their hearts delight in the doctrines of the gospel, and sweetly acquiesce in the way of salvation therein revealed.*

Under the head of the first distinguishing characteristic of gracious affections, I observed, that there is given to those that are regenerated, a new supernatural sense, that is as it were a certain divine spiritual taste, which is, in its whole nature, diverse from any former kinds of sensation of the mind, as tasting is diverse from any of the other five senses, and that something is perceived by a true saint in the exercise of this new sense of mind, in spiritual and divine things, as entirely different from any thing that is perceived in them by natural men, as the sweet taste of honey is diverse from the ideas men get of honey by looking on it or feeling it. Now this that I have been speaking of, viz., the beauty of holiness, is that thing in spiritual and divine things, which is perceived by this spiritual sense, that is so diverse from all that natural men perceive in them; this kind of beauty is the quality that is the immediate object of this spiritual sense; this is the sweetness that is the proper object of this spiritual taste. The Scripture often represents the beauty and sweetness of holiness as the grand object of a spiritual taste and spiritual appetite. This was the sweet food of the holy soul of Jesus Christ, John iv. 32, 34: "I have meat to eat that ye know not of.—My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." I know of no part of the holy Scriptures, where the nature and evidences of true and sincere godliness are so much of set purpose and so fully and

* "To the right closing with Christ's person, this is always required, to taste the bitterness of sin, as the greatest evil: else a man will never close with Christ, for his holiness in him, and from him, as the greatest good. For we told you, that that is the right closing with Christ for himself, when it is for his holiness. For ask a whorish heart, what beauty he sees in the person of Christ; he will, after he has looked over his kingdom, his righteousness, and all his works, see a beauty in them, because they do serve his turn, to comfort him only. Ask a virgin, he will see his happiness in all; but that which makes the Lord amiable is his holiness, which is in him to make him holy too. As in marriage, it is the personal beauty draws the heart. And hence I have thought it reason, that he that loves the brethren for a little grace, will love Christ much more." *Shepard's Parable*, Part I. p. 84.

largely insisted on and delineated, as the 119th Psalm; the Psalmist declares his design in the first verses of the Psalm, and he keeps his eye on this design all along, and pursues it to the end: but in this Psalm the excellency of holiness is represented as the immediate object of a spiritual taste, relish, appetite, and delight of God's law; that grand expression and emanation of the holiness of God's nature, and prescription of holiness to the creature, is all along represented as the food and entertainment, and as the great object of the love, the appetite, the complacence and rejoicing of the gracious nature, which prizes God's commandments above gold, yea, the finest gold, and to which they are sweeter than the honey and honey comb; and that upon account of their holiness, as I observed before. The same Psalmist declares, that this is the sweetness that a spiritual taste relishes in God's law: Psal. xix. 7, 8, 9, 10, "The law of the Lord is perfect; the commandment of the Lord is pure; the fear of the Lord is clean; the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart;—the judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether; more to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey, and the honey comb."

A holy love has a holy object. The holiness of love consists especially in this, that it is the love of that which is holy, as holy, or for its holiness; so that it is the holiness of the object, which is the quality whereon it fixes and terminates. A holy nature must needs love that in holy things chiefly, which is most agreeable to itself; but surely that in divine things, which above all others is agreeable to a holy nature, is holiness, because holiness must be above all other things agreeable to holiness; for nothing can be more agreeable to any nature than itself; holy nature must be above all things agreeable to holy nature: and so the holy nature of God and Christ, and the word of God, and other divine things, must be above all other things agreeable to the holy nature that is in the saints.

And again, a holy nature doubtless loves holy things, especially on the account of that for which sinful nature has enmity against them; but that for which chiefly sinful nature is at enmity against holy things, is their holiness; it is for this, that the carnal mind is at enmity against God, and against the law of God, and the people of God. Now it is just arguing from contraries; from contrary causes to contrary effects; from opposite natures to opposite tendencies. We know that holiness is of a directly contrary nature to wickedness; as therefore it is the nature of wickedness chiefly to oppose and hate holiness; so it must be the nature of holiness chiefly to tend to, and delight in holiness.

The holy nature in the saints and angels in heaven (where the true tendency of it best appears) is principally engaged by the holiness of divine things. This is the divine beauty which chiefly engages the attention, admiration, and praise of the bright and burning seraphim: Isa. vi. 3, "One cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory." And Rev. iv. 8, "They rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." So the glorified saints, chap. xv. 4, "Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? For thou only art holy."

And the Scriptures represent the saints on earth as adoring God primarily on this account, and admiring and extolling all God's attributes, either as deriving loveliness from his holiness, or as being a part of it. Thus when they praise God for his power, his holiness is the beauty that engages them: Psal. xcviii. 1, "O sing unto the Lord a new song, for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm hath gotten him the victory." So when they praise him for his justice and terrible majesty: Psal. xcix. 2, 3, "The Lord is

great in Zion, and he is high above all people. Let them praise thy great and terrible name; for it is holy." Ver. 5, "Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship at his footstool; for he is holy." Ver. 8, 9, "Thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance of their inventions. Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship at his holy hill: for the Lord our God, is holy." So when they praise God for his mercy and faithfulness: Psal. xcvii. 11, 12, "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous; and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness." 1 Sam. ii. 2, "There is none holy as the Lord: for there is none besides thee: neither is there any rock like our God."

By this therefore all may try their affections, and particularly their love and joy. Various kinds of creatures show the difference of their natures, very much in the different things they relish as their proper good, one delighting in that which another abhors. Such a difference is there between true saints, and natural men: natural men have no sense of the goodness and excellency of holy things, at least for their holiness; they have no taste for that kind of good; and so may be said not to know that divine good, or not to see it; it is wholly hid from them; but the saints, by the mighty power of God, have it discovered to them; they have that supernatural, most noble and divine sense given them, by which they perceive it; and it is this that captivates their hearts, and delights them above all things; it is the most amiable and sweet thing to the heart of a true saint, that is to be found in heaven or earth; that which above all others attracts and engages his soul; and that wherein, above all things, he places his happiness, and which he lots upon for solace and entertainment to his mind, in this world, and full satisfaction and blessedness in another. By this, you may examine your love to God, and to Jesus Christ, and to the word of God, and your joy in them, and also your love to the people of God, and your desires after heaven; whether they be from a supreme delight in this sort of beauty, without being primarily moved from your imagined interest in them, or expectations from them. There are many high affections, great seeming love and rapturous joys, which have nothing of this holy relish belonging to them.

Particularly, by what has been said you may try your discoveries of the glory of God's grace and love, and your affections arising from them. The grace of God may appear lovely two ways; either as *bonum utile*, a profitable good to me, that which greatly serves my interest, and so suits my self-love; or as *bonum formosum*, a beautiful good in itself, and part of the moral and spiritual excellency of the divine nature. In this latter respect it is that the true saints have their hearts affected, and love captivated by the free grace of God in the first place.

From the things that have been said, it appears, that if persons have a great sense of the natural perfections of God, and are greatly affected with them, or have any other sight or sense of God than that which consists in, or implies a sense of the beauty of his moral perfections, it is no certain sign of grace; as particularly men's having a great sense of the awful greatness and terrible majesty of God; for this is only God's natural perfection, and what men may see, and yet be entirely blind to the beauty of his moral perfection, and have nothing of that spiritual taste which relishes this divine sweetness.

It has been shown already, in what was said upon the first distinguishing mark of gracious affections, that that which is spiritual, is entirely different in its nature, from all that it is possible any graceless person should be the subject of, while he continues graceless. But it is possible that those who are wholly without grace should have a clear sight and very great and affecting sense of

God's greatness, his mighty power, and awful majesty; for this is what the devils have, though they have lost the spiritual knowledge of God, consisting in a sense of the amiableness of his moral perfections; they are perfectly destitute of any sense or relish of that kind of beauty, yet they have a very great knowledge of the natural glory of God (if I may so speak), or his awful greatness and majesty; this they behold, and are affected with the apprehensions of, and therefore tremble before him. This glory of God all shall behold at the day of judgment; God will make all rational beings to behold it to a great degree indeed, angels and devils, saints and sinners: Christ will manifest his infinite greatness, and awful majesty, to every one, in a most open, clear, and convincing manner, and in a light that none can resist, "when he shall come in the glory of his Father, and every eye shall see him;" when they shall cry to the mountains to fall upon them, to hide them from the face of him that sits upon the throne, they are represented as seeing the glory of God's majesty, Isa. ii. 10, 19, 21. God will make all his enemies to behold this, and to live in a most clear and affecting view of it, in hell, to all eternity. God hath often declared his immutable purpose to make all his enemies to know him in this respect, in so often annexing these words to the threatenings he denounces against them: "And they shall know that I am the Lord;" yea he hath sworn that all men shall see his glory in this respect: Numb. xiv. 21, "As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord." And this kind of manifestation of God is very often spoken of in Scripture, as made, or to be made, in the sight of God's enemies in this world, Exod. ix. 16, and chap. xiv. 18, and xv. 16, Psal. lxvi. 3, and xlvi. 10, and other places innumerable. This was a manifestation which God made of himself in the sight of that wicked congregation at Mount Sinai; deeply affecting them with it; so that all the people in the camp trembled. Wicked men and devils will see, and have a great sense of every thing that appertains to the glory of God, but only the beauty of his moral perfection; they will see his infinite greatness and majesty, his infinite power, and will be fully convinced of his omniscience, and his eternity and immutability; and they will see and know every thing appertaining to his moral attributes themselves, but only the beauty and amiableness of them; they will see and know that he is perfectly just, and righteous, and true, and that he is a holy God, of purer eyes than to behold evil, who cannot look on iniquity; and they will see the wonderful manifestations of his infinite goodness and free grace to the saints; and there is nothing will be hid from their eyes, but only the beauty of these moral attributes, and that beauty of the other attributes, which arises from it. And so natural men in this world are capable of having a very affecting sense of every thing else that appertains to God, but this only. Nebuchadnezzar had a great and very affecting sense of the infinite greatness and awful majesty of God, of his supreme and absolute dominion, and mighty and irresistible power, and of his sovereignty, and that he, and all the inhabitants of the earth were nothing before him; and also had a great conviction in his conscience of his justice, and an affecting sense of his great goodness, Dan. iv. 1, 2, 3, 34, 35, 37. And the sense that Darius had of God's perfections, seems to be very much like his, Dan. vi. 25, &c. But the saints and angels do behold the glory of God consisting in the beauty of his holiness; and it is this sight only that will melt and humble the hearts of men, and wean them from the world, and draw them to God, and effectually change them. A sight of the awful greatness of God, may overpower men's strength, and be more than they can endure; but if the moral beauty of God be hid, the enmity of the heart will remain in its full strength, no love will be enkindled, all will not be effectual

to gain the will, but that will remain inflexible; whereas the first glimpse of the moral and spiritual glory of God shining into the heart, produces all these effects as it were with omnipotent power, which nothing can withstand.

The sense that natural men may have of the awful greatness of God may affect them various ways; it may not only terrify them, but it may elevate them, and raise their joy and praise, as their circumstances may be. This will be the natural effect of it, under the real or supposed receipt of some extraordinary mercy from God, by the influence of mere principles of nature. It has been shown already, that the receipt of kindness may, by the influence of natural principles, affect the heart with gratitude and praise to God; but if a person, at the same time that he receives remarkable kindness from God, has a sense of his infinite greatness, and that he is but nothing in comparison of him, surely this will naturally raise his gratitude and praise the higher, for kindness to one so much inferior. A sense of God's greatness had this effect upon Nebuchadnezzar, under the receipt of that extraordinary favor of his restoration, after he had been driven from men, and had his dwelling with the beasts: a sense of God's exceeding greatness raises his gratitude very high; so that he does, in the most lofty terms, extol and magnify God, and calls upon all the world to do it with him; and much more if a natural man, at the same time that he is greatly affected with God's infinite greatness and majesty, entertains a strong conceit that this great God has made him his child and special favorite, and promised him eternal glory in his highest love, will this have a tendency, according to the course of nature, to raise his joy and praise to a great height.

Therefore, it is beyond doubt that too much weight has been laid, by many persons of late, on discoveries of God's greatness, awful majesty, and natural perfection, operating after this manner, without any real view of the holy majesty of God. And experience does abundantly witness to what reason and Scripture declare as to this matter; there having been very many persons, who have seemed to be overpowered with the greatness and majesty of God, and consequently elevated in the manner that has been spoken of, who have been very far from having appearances of a Christian spirit and temper, in any manner of proportion, or fruits in practice in any wise agreeable; but their discoveries have worked in a way contrary to the operation of truly spiritual discoveries.

Not that a sense of God's greatness and natural attributes is not exceeding useful and necessary. For, as I observed before, this is implied in a manifestation of the beauty of God's holiness. Though that be something beyond it, it supposes it, as the greater supposes the less. And though natural men may have a sense of the natural perfections of God; yet undoubtedly this is more frequent and common with the saints than with natural men; and grace tends to enable men to see these things in a better manner than natural men do; and not only enables them to see God's natural attributes, but that beauty of those attributes, which (according to our way of conceiving of God) is derived from his holiness.

IV. Gracious affections do arise from the mind's being enlightened, richly and spiritually to understand or apprehend divine things.

Holy affections are not heat without light; but evermore arise from the information of the understanding, some spiritual instruction that the mind receives, some light or actual knowledge. The child of God is graciously affected, because he sees and understands something more of divine things than he did before, more of God or Christ, and of the glorious things exhibited in the gospel; he has some clearer and better view than he had before, when he was

not affected: either he receives some understanding of divine things that is new to him; or has his former knowledge renewed after the view was decayed: 1 John iv. 7, "Every one that loveth, knoweth God." Phil. i. 9, "I pray that your love may abound more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment." Rom. x. 2, "They have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge." Col. iii. 10, "The new man, which is renewed in knowledge." Psalm xliii. 3, 4, "O send out thy light and thy truth; let them lead me, let them bring me unto thy holy hill." John vi. 45, "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and learned of the Father, cometh unto me." Knowledge is the key that first opens the hard heart, and enlarges the affections, and so opens the way for men into the kingdom of heaven; Luke xi. 52, "Ye have taken away the key of knowledge."

Now there are many affections which do not arise from any light in the understanding. And when it is thus, it is a sure evidence that these affections are not spiritual, let them be ever so high.* Indeed they have some new apprehensions which they had not before. Such is the nature of man, that it is impossible his mind should be affected, unless it be by something that he apprehends, or that his mind conceives of. But in many persons those apprehensions or conceptions that they have, wherewith they are affected, have nothing of the nature of knowledge or instruction in them. As for instance, when a person is affected with a lively idea, suddenly excited in his mind, of some shape or very beautiful pleasant form of countenance, or some shining light, or other glorious outward appearance: here is something apprehended or conceived by the mind; but there is nothing of the nature of instruction in it; persons become never the wiser by such things, or more knowing about God, or a Mediator between God and man, or the way of salvation by Christ, or any thing contained in any of the doctrines of the gospel. Persons by these external ideas have no further acquaintance with God, as to any of the attributes or perfections of his nature; nor have they any further understanding of his word, or any of his ways or works. Truly spiritual and gracious affections are not raised after this manner; these arise from the enlightening of the understanding to understand the things that are taught of God and Christ, in a new manner, the coming to a new understanding of the excellent nature of God, and his wonderful perfections, some new view of Christ in his spiritual excellencies and fulness, or things opened to him in a new manner, that appertain to the way of salvation by Christ, whereby he now sees how it is, and understands those divine and spiritual doctrines which once were foolishness to him. Such enlightenings of the understanding as these, are things entirely different in their nature from strong ideas of shapes and colors, and outward brightness and glory, or sounds and voices. That all gracious affections do arise from some instruction or enlightening of the understanding, is therefore a further proof, that affections which arise from such impression on the imagination, are not gracious affections, besides the things observed before, which make this evident.

Hence also it appears, that affections arising from texts of Scripture coming to the mind are vain, when no instruction received in the understanding from those texts, or any thing taught in those texts, is the ground of the affection, but the manner of their coming to the mind. When Christ makes the Scripture a means of the heart's burning with gracious affection, it is by opening the

* "Many that have had mighty strong affections at first conversion, afterwards become dry, and wither, and consume, and pine, and die away: and now their hypocrisy is manifest; if not to all the world by open profaneness, yet to the discerning eye of living Christians, by a formal, barren, unsavory, unfruitful heart and course; because they never had light to conviction enough as yet."

Scriptures to their understandings; Luke xxiv. 32, "Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?" It appears also that the affection which is occasioned by the coming of a text of Scripture must be vain, when the affection is founded on something that is supposed to be taught by it, which really is not contained in it, nor in any other Scripture; because such supposed instruction is not real instruction, but a mistake and misapprehension of the mind. As for instance, when persons suppose that they are expressly taught by some Scripture coming to their minds, that they in particular are beloved of God, or that their sins are forgiven, that God is their Father, and the like, this is a mistake or misapprehension; for the Scripture nowhere reveals the individual persons who are beloved, expressly; but only by consequence, by revealing the qualifications of persons that are beloved of God: and therefore this matter is not to be learned from Scripture any other way than by consequence, and from these qualifications; for things are not to be learned from the Scripture any other way than they are taught in the Scripture.

Affections really arise from ignorance, rather than instruction, in these instances which have been mentioned; as likewise in some others that might be mentioned. As some, when they find themselves free of speech in prayer, they call it God's being with them; and this affects them more; and so their affections are set agoing and increased; when they look not into the cause of this freedom of speech, which may arise many other ways besides God's spiritual presence. So some are much affected with some apt thoughts that come into their minds about the Scripture, and call it the Spirit of God teaching them. So they ascribe many of the workings of their own minds, which they have a high opinion of, and are pleased and taken with, to the special immediate influences of God's Spirit; and so are mightily affected with their privilege. And there are some instances of persons, in whom it seems manifest, that the first ground of their affection is some bodily sensation. The animal spirits, by some cause (and probably sometimes by the devil) are suddenly and unaccountably put into a very agreeable motion, causing persons to feel pleasantly in their bodies; the animal spirits are put into such a motion as is wont to be connected with the exhilaration of the mind; and the soul, by the laws of the union of soul and body, hence feels pleasure. The motion of the animal spirits does not first arise from any affection or apprehension of the mind whatsoever; but the very first thing that is felt, is an exhilaration of the animal spirits, and a pleasant external sensation it may be in their breasts. Hence through ignorance, the person being surprised, begins to think, surely this is the Holy Ghost coming into him. And then the mind begins to be affected and raised. There is first great joy; and then many other affections, in a very tumultuous manner, putting all nature, both body and mind, into a mighty ruffle. For though, as I observed before, it is the soul only that is the seat of the affections; yet this hinders not but that bodily sensations may, in this manner, be an occasion of affections in the mind.

And if men's religious affections do truly arise from some instruction or light in the understanding; yet the affection is not gracious, unless the light which is the ground of it be spiritual. Affections may be excited by that understanding of things, which they obtain merely by human teaching, with the common improvement of the faculties of the mind. Men may be much affected by knowledge of things of religion that they obtain this way; as some philosophers have been mightily affected, and almost carried beyond themselves, by the discoveries they have made in mathematics and natural philosophy. So

men may be much affected from common illuminations of the Spirit of God, in which God assists men's faculties to a greater degree of that kind of understanding of religious matters, which they have in some degree, by only the ordinary exercise and improvement of their own faculties. Such illuminations may much affect the mind; as in many whom we read of in Scripture, that were once enlightened; but these affections are not spiritual.

There is such a thing, if the Scriptures are of any use to teach us any thing, as a spiritual, supernatural understanding of divine things, that is peculiar to the saints, and which those who are not saints have nothing of. It is certainly a kind of understanding, apprehending or discerning of divine things, that natural men have nothing of, which the apostle speaks of, 1 Cor. ii. 14: "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." It is certainly a kind of seeing or discerning spiritual things peculiar to the saints, which is spoken of, 1 John iii. 6: "Whosoever sinneth, hath not seen him, neither known him." 3 John 11, "He that doeth evil, hath not seen God." And John vi. 40, "This is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life." Chap. xiv. 19, "The world seeth me no more; but ye see me." Chap. xvii. 3, "This is eternal life, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." Matt. xi. 27, "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." John xii. 45, "He that seeth me, seeth him that sent me." Psal. ix. 10, "They that know thy name, will put their trust in thee." Phil. iii. 8, "I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord:"—ver. 10, "That I may know him." And innumerable other places there are, all over the Bible, which show the same. And that there is such a thing as an understanding of divine things, which in its nature and kind is wholly different from all knowledge that natural men have, is evident from this, that there is an understanding of divine things, which the Scripture calls spiritual understanding, Col. i. 9: "We do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." It has been already shown, that that which is spiritual, in the ordinary use of the word in the New Testament, is entirely different in nature and kind, from all which natural men are, or can be the subjects of.

From hence it may be surely inferred wherein spiritual understanding consists. For if there be in the saints a kind of apprehension or perception, which is in its nature perfectly diverse from all that natural men have, or that it is possible they should have, until they have a new nature; it must consist in their having a certain kind of ideas or sensations of mind, which are simply diverse from all that is or can be in the minds of natural men. And that is the same thing as to say, that it consists in the sensations of a new spiritual sense, which the souls of natural men have not; as is evident by what has been before, once and again observed. But I have already shown what that new spiritual sense is which the saints have given them in regeneration, and what is the object of it. I have shown that the immediate object of it is the supreme beauty and excellency of the nature of divine things, as they are in themselves. And this is agreeable to the Scripture; the apostle very plainly teaches, that the great thing discovered by spiritual light, and understood by spiritual knowledge, is the glory of divine things, 2 Cor iv. 3, 4: "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world

hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them;" together with ver. 6: "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ." And chap. iii. 18, preceding: "But we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." And it must needs be so, for, as has been before observed, the Scripture often teaches, that all true religion summarily consists in the love of divine things. And therefore that kind of understanding or knowledge, which is the proper foundation of true religion, must be the knowledge of the loveliness of divine things. For doubtless, that knowledge which is the proper foundation of love, is the knowledge of loveliness. What that beauty of divine things is, which is the proper and immediate object of a spiritual sense of mind, was showed under the last head insisted on, viz., that it is the beauty of their moral perfection. Therefore it is in the view or sense of this, that spiritual understanding does more immediately and primarily consist. And indeed it is plain it can be nothing else; for (as has been shown) there is nothing pertaining to divine things, besides the beauty of their moral excellency, and those properties and qualities of divine things which this beauty is the foundation of, but what natural men and devils can see and know, and will know fully and clearly to all eternity.

From what has been said, therefore, we come necessarily to this conclusion, concerning that wherein spiritual understanding consists, viz., that it consists in "a sense of the heart, of the supreme beauty and sweetness of the holiness or moral perfection of divine things, together with all that discerning and knowledge of things of religion, that depends upon, and flows from such a sense."

Spiritual understanding consists primarily in a sense of heart of that spiritual beauty. I say, a sense of heart; for it is not speculation merely that is concerned in this kind of understanding; nor can there be a clear distinction made between the two faculties of understanding and will, as acting distinctly and separately, in this matter. When the mind is sensible of the sweet beauty and amiableness of a thing, that implies a sensibleness of sweetness and delight in the presence of the idea of it: and this sensibleness of the amiableness or delightfulness of beauty, carries in the very nature of it the sense of the heart; or an effect and impression the soul is the subject of, as a substance possessed of taste, inclination and will.

There is a distinction to be made between a mere notional understanding, wherein the mind only beholds things in the exercise of a speculative faculty; and the sense of the heart, wherein the mind does not only speculate and behold, but relishes and feels. That sort of knowledge, by which a man has a sensible perception of amiableness and loathsomeness, or of sweetness and nauseousness, is not just the same sort of knowledge with that by which he knows what a triangle is, and what a square is. The one is mere speculative knowledge, the other sensible knowledge, in which more than the mere intellect is concerned; the heart is the proper subject of it, or the soul, as a being that not only beholds, but has inclination, and is pleased or displeased. And yet there is the nature of instruction in it; as he that has perceived the sweet taste of honey, knows much more about it, than he who has only looked upon, and felt of it.

The apostle seems to make a distinction between mere speculative knowledge of the things of religion, and spiritual knowledge, in calling that the form

of knowledge, and of the truth in the law, Rom. ii. 20, "Which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law." The latter is often represented by relishing, smelling, or tasting: 2 Cor. ii. 14, "Now thanks be to God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ Jesus, and maketh manifest the savor of his knowledge in every place." Matt. xvi. 23, "Thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those things that be of men." 1 Pet. ii. 2, 3, "As new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby; if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious." Cant. i. 3, "Because of the savor of thy good ointments, thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee;" compared with 1 John ii. 20, "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things."

Spiritual understanding primarily consists in this sense, of taste of the moral beauty of divine things; so that no knowledge can be called spiritual, any further than it arises from this, and has this in it. But secondarily it includes all that discerning and knowledge of things of religion, which depend upon and flow from such a sense.

When the true beauty and amiableness of the holiness or true moral good that is in divine things is discovered to the soul, it as it were opens a new world to its views. This shows the glory of all the perfections of God, and of every thing appertaining to the divine Being. For, as was observed before, the beauty of all arises from God's moral perfection. This shows the glory of all God's works, both of creation and providence. For it is the special glory of them, that God's holiness, righteousness, faithfulness, and goodness, are so manifested in them; and without these moral perfections, there would be no glory in that power and skill with which they are wrought. The glorifying of God's moral perfections, is the special end of all the works of God's hands. By this sense of the moral beauty of divine things, is understood the sufficiency of Christ as a mediator; for it is only by the discovery of the beauty of the moral perfection of Christ, that the believer is let into the knowledge of the excellency of his person, so as to know any thing more of it than the devils do; and it is only by the knowledge of the excellency of Christ's person, that any know his sufficiency as a mediator; for the latter depends upon, and arises from the former. It is by seeing the excellency of Christ's person, that the saints are made sensible of the preciousness of his blood, and its sufficiency to atone for sin; for therein consists the preciousness of Christ's blood, that it is the blood of so excellent and amiable a person. And on this depends the meritoriousness of his obedience, and sufficiency and prevalence of his intercession. By this sight of the moral beauty of divine things, is seen the beauty of the way of salvation by Christ; for that consists in the beauty of the moral perfections of God, which wonderfully shines forth in every step of this method of salvation, from beginning to end. By this is seen the fitness and suitableness of this way: for this wholly consists in its tendency to deliver us from sin and hell, and to bring us to the happiness which consists in the possession and enjoyment of moral good, in a way sweetly agreeing with God's moral perfections. And in the way's being contrived so as to attain these ends, consists the excellent wisdom of that way. By this is seen the excellency of the word of God. Take away all the moral beauty and sweetness in the word, and the Bible is left wholly a dead letter, a dry, lifeless, tasteless thing. By this is seen the true foundation of our duty, the worthiness of God to be so esteemed, honored, loved, submitted to, and served, as he requires of us, and the amiableness of the duties themselves that are required of us. And by this is seen the true evil of sin; for he who sees the beauty of holiness, must necessarily see the hatefulness of sin, its con-

trary. By this men understand the true glory of heaven, which consists in the beauty and happiness that is in holiness. By this is seen the amiableness and happiness of both saints and angels. He that sees the beauty of holiness, or true moral good, sees the greatest and most important thing in the world, which is the fulness of all things, without which all the world is empty, no better than nothing, yea, worse than nothing. Unless this is seen, nothing is seen that is worth the seeing; for there is no other true excellency or beauty. Unless this be understood, nothing is understood that is worthy of the exercise of the noble faculty of understanding. This is the beauty of the Godhead, and the divinity of divinity (if I may so speak), the good of the infinite fountain of good; without which, God himself (if that were possible) would be an infinite evil; without which we ourselves had better never have been; and without which there had better have been no being. He therefore in effect knows nothing, that knows not this; his knowledge is but the shadow of knowledge, or the form of knowledge, as the apostle calls it. Well therefore may the Scriptures represent those who are destitute of that spiritual sense by which is perceived the beauty of holiness, as totally blind, deaf, and senseless, yea, dead. And well may regeneration, in which this divine sense is given to the soul by its Creator, be represented as opening the blind eyes, and raising the dead, and bringing a person into a new world. For if what has been said be considered, it will be manifest, that when a person has this sense and knowledge given him, he will view nothing as he did before; though before he knew all things "after the flesh, yet henceforth he will know them so no more; and he is become a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new;" agreeable to 2 Cor. v. 16, 17.

And besides the things that have been already mentioned, there arises from this sense of spiritual beauty, all true experimental knowledge of religion, which is of itself as it were a new world of knowledge. He that sees not the beauty of holiness, knows not what one of the graces of God's Spirit is, he is destitute of any idea or conception of all gracious exercises of the soul, and all holy comforts and delights, and all effects of the saving influences of the Spirit of God on the heart; and so is ignorant of the greatest works of God, the most important and glorious effects of his power upon the creature; and also is wholly ignorant of the saints as saints, he knows not what they are; and in effect is ignorant of the whole spiritual world.

Things being thus, it plainly appears, that God's implanting that spiritual supernatural sense which has been spoken of, makes a great change in a man. And were it not for the very imperfect degree, in which this sense is commonly given at first, or the small degree of this glorious light, that first dawns upon the soul; the change made by this spiritual opening of the eyes in conversion, would be much greater and more remarkable every way, than if a man, who had been born blind, and with only the other four senses, should continue so a long time, and then at once should have the sense of seeing imparted to him, in the midst of the clear light of the sun, discovering a world of visible objects. For though sight be more noble than any of the other external senses, yet this spiritual sense which has been spoken of, is infinitely more noble than that, or any other principle of discerning that a man naturally has, and the object of this sense infinitely greater and more important.

This sort of understanding or knowledge, is that knowledge of divine things from whence all truly gracious affections do proceed; by which therefore all affections are to be tried. Those affections that arise wholly from any other kind of knowledge, or do result from any other kind of apprehensions of mind, are vain.

From what has been said, may be learned wherein the most essential difference lies between that light or understanding which is given by the common influences of the Spirit of God, on the hearts of natural men, and that saving instruction which is given to the saints. The latter primarily and most essentially lies in beholding the holy beauty that is in divine things; which is the only true moral good, and which the soul of fallen man is by nature totally blind to. The former consists only in a further understanding, through the assistance of natural principles, of those things which men may know, in some measure, by the alone ordinary exercise of their faculties. And this knowledge consists only in the knowledge of those things pertaining to religion, which are natural. Thus for instance, in those awakenings of the conscience, that natural men are often subject to, the Spirit of God gives no knowledge of the true moral beauty which is in divine things; but only assists the mind to a clearer idea of the guilt of sin, or its relation to punishment, and connection with the evil of suffering (without any sight of its moral evil, or odiousness as sin), and a clearer idea of the natural perfections of God, wherein consists, not his holy beauty and glory, but his awful and terrible greatness. It is a clear sight of this, that will fully awaken the consciences of wicked men at the day of judgment, without any spiritual light. And it is a less degree of the same that awakens the consciences of natural men, without spiritual light in this world. The same discoveries are in some measure given in the conscience of an awakened sinner in this world, which will be given more fully, in the consciences of sinners at the day of judgment. The same kind of sight or apprehension of God, in a less degree, makes awakened sinners in this world sensible of the dreadful guilt of sin, against so great and terrible a God, and sensible of its amazing punishment, and fills them with fearful apprehensions of divine wrath, that will thoroughly convince all wicked men, of the infinitely dreadful nature and guilt of sin, and astonish them with apprehensions of wrath, when Christ shall come in the glory of his power and majesty, and every eye shall see him, and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. And in those common illuminations which are sometimes given to natural men, exciting in them some kind of religious desire, love, and joy, the mind is only assisted to a clearer apprehension of the natural good that is in divine things. Thus sometimes, under common illuminations, men are raised with the ideas of the natural good that is in heaven; as its outward glory, its ease, its honor and advancement, a being there the object of the high favor of God, and the great respect of men, and angels, &c. So there are many things exhibited in the gospel concerning God and Christ, and the way of salvation, that have a natural good in them, which suits the natural principle of self-love. Thus in that great goodness of God to sinners, and the wonderful dying love of Christ, there is a natural good which all men love, as they love themselves; as well as a spiritual and holy beauty, which is seen only by the regenerate. Therefore there are many things appertaining to the word of God's grace delivered in the gospel, which may cause natural men, when they hear it, anon with joy to receive it. All that love which natural men have to God and Christ, and Christian virtues, and good men, is not from any sight of the amiableness of the holiness, or true moral excellency of these things; but only for the sake of the natural good there is in them. All natural men's hatred of sin, is as much from principles of nature, as men's hatred of a tiger for his rapaciousness, or their aversion to a serpent for his poison and hurtfulness; and all their love of Christian virtue, is from no higher principle, than their love of a man's good nature, which appears amiable to natural men; but no otherwise than silver and gold appears amiable in the eyes of a merchant, or than the blackness of the soil is beautiful in the eyes of the farmer.

From what has been said of the nature of spiritual understanding, it appears that spiritual understanding does not consist in any new doctrinal knowledge, or in having suggested to the mind any new proposition, not before read or heard of; for it is plain that this suggesting of new propositions, is a thing entirely diverse from giving the mind a new taste or relish of beauty and sweetness.* It is also evident that spiritual knowledge does not consist in any new doctrinal explanation of any part of the Scripture; for still, this is but doctrinal knowledge, or the knowledge of propositions; the doctrinal explaining of any part of Scripture, is only giving us to understand what are the propositions contained or taught in that part of Scripture.

Hence it appears, that the spiritual understanding of the Scripture, does not consist in opening to the mind the mystical meaning of the Scripture, in its parables, types, and allegories; for this is only a doctrinal explication of the Scripture. He that explains what is meant by the stony ground, and the seed's springing up suddenly, and quickly withering away, only explains what propositions or doctrines are taught in it. So he that explains what is typified by Jacob's ladder, and the angels of God ascending and descending on it, or what was typified by Joshua's leading Israel through Jordan, only shows what propositions are hid in these passages. And many men can explain these types, who have no spiritual knowledge. It is possible that a man might know how to interpret all the types, parables, enigmas, and allegories in the Bible, and not have one beam of spiritual light in his mind; because he may not have the least degree of that spiritual sense of the holy beauty of divine things which has been spoken of, and may see nothing of this kind of glory in any thing contained in any of these mysteries, or any other part of the Scripture. It is plain, by what the apostle says, that a man might understand all such mysteries, and have no saving grace, 1 Cor. xiii. 2: "And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." They therefore are very foolish, who are exalted in an opinion of their own spiritual attainments, from notions that come into their minds, of the mystical meaning of these and those passages of Scripture, as though it was a spiritual understanding of these passages, immediately given them by the Spirit of God, and hence have their affections highly raised; and what has been said, shows the vanity of such affections.

From what has been said, it is also evident, that it is not spiritual knowledge for persons to be informed of their duty, by having it immediately suggested to their minds, that such and such outward actions or deeds are the will of God. If we suppose that it is truly God's manner thus to signify his will to his people, by immediate inward suggestions, such suggestions have nothing of the nature of spiritual light. Such kind of knowledge would only be one kind of doctrinal knowledge; a proposition concerning the will of God, is as properly a doctrine of religion, as a proposition concerning the nature of God, or a work of God; and a having either of these kinds of propositions, or any other proposition, declared to a man, either by speech, or inward suggestion, differs vastly from a having the holy beauty of divine things manifested to the soul, wherein spiritual knowledge does most essentially consist. Thus there was no spiritual light in Balaam; though he had the will of God immediately suggested to him

* Calvin, in his Institutions, Book I. Chap. ix. § 1, says, "It is not the office of the Spirit that is promised us, to make new and before unheard of revelations, or to coin some new kind of doctrine, which tends to draw us away from the received doctrine of the gospel; but to seal and confirm to us that very doctrine which is by the gospel." And in the same place he speaks of some that in those days maintained the contrary notion, "pretending to be immediately led by the Spirit, as persons that were governed by a most haughty self-conceit: and not so properly to be looked upon as only laboring under a mistake, as driven by a sort of raving madness."

by the Spirit of God from time to time, concerning the way that he should go, and what he should do and say.

It is manifest, therefore, that a being led and directed in this manner, is not that holy and spiritual leading of the Spirit of God, which is peculiar to the saints, and a distinguishing mark of the sons of God, spoken of, Rom. viii. 14: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, are the sons of God." Gal. v. 18, "But if ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law."

And if persons have the will of God concerning their actions, suggested to them by some text of Scripture, suddenly and extraordinarily brought to their minds, which text, as the words lay in the Bible before they came to their minds, related to the action and behavior of some other person, but they suppose, as God sent the words to them, he intended something further by them, and meant such a particular action of theirs; I say, if persons should have the will of God thus suggested to them with texts of Scripture, it alters not the case. The suggestion being accompanied with an apt text of Scripture, does not make the suggestion to be the nature of spiritual instruction. As for instance, if a person in New England, on some occasion, were at a loss whether it was his duty to go into some popish or heathenish land, where he was like to be exposed to many difficulties and dangers, and should pray to God that he would show him the way of his duty; and after earnest prayer, should have those words which God spake to Jacob, Gen. xlvi., suddenly and extraordinarily brought to his mind, as if they were spoken to him; "Fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will go with thee; and I will also surely bring you up again." In which words, though as they lay in the Bible before they came to his mind, they related only to Jacob, and his behavior; yet he supposes that God has a further meaning, as they were brought and applied to him; that thus they are to be understood in a new sense, that by Egypt is to be understood this particular country he has in his mind, and that the action intended is his going thither, and that the meaning of the promise is, that God would bring him back into New England again. There is nothing of the nature of a spiritual or gracious leading of the Spirit in this; for there is nothing of the nature of spiritual understanding in it. Thus to understand texts of Scripture, is not to have a spiritual understanding of them. Spiritually to understand the Scriptures, is rightly to understand what is in the Scripture, and what was in it before it was understood: it is to understand rightly, what used to be contained in the meaning of it, and not the making of a new meaning. When the mind is enlightened spiritually and rightly to understand the Scripture, it is enabled to see that in the Scripture, which before was not seen by reason of blindness. But if it was by reason of blindness, that is an evidence that the same meaning was in it before, otherwise it would have been no blindness not to see it; it is no blindness not to see a meaning which is not there. Spiritually enlightening the eyes to understand the Scripture, is to open the eyes: Psal. cxix. 18, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law;" which argues that the reason why the same was not seen in the Scripture before, was that the eyes were shut; which would not be the case, if the meaning that is now understood was not there before, but is now newly added to the Scripture, by the manner of the Scripture's coming to my mind. This making a new meaning to the Scripture, is the same thing as making a new Scripture; it is properly adding to the word, which is threatened with so dreadful a curse. Spiritually to understand the Scripture, is to have the eyes of the mind opened, to behold the wonderful spiritual excellency of the glorious things contained in the true meaning of it, and that always were contained in it, ever since it was written; to behold the amiable and bright ma-

nifestations of the divine perfections, and of the excellency and sufficiency of Christ, and the excellency and suitableness of the way of salvation by Christ, and the spiritual glory of the precepts and promises of the Scripture, &c., which things are, and always were in the Bible, and would have been seen before, if it had not been for blindness, without having any new sense added, by the words being sent by God to a particular person, and spoken anew to him, with a new meaning.

And as to a gracious leading of the Spirit, it consists in two things: partly in instructing a person in his duty by the Spirit, and partly in powerfully inducing him to comply with that instruction. But so far as the gracious leading of the Spirit lies in instruction, it consists in a person's being guided by a spiritual and distinguishing taste of that which has in it true moral beauty. I have shown that spiritual knowledge primarily consists in a taste or relish of the amiableness and beauty of that which is truly good and holy: this holy relish is a thing that discerns and distinguishes between good and evil, between holy and unholy, without being at the trouble of a train of reasoning. As he who has a true relish of external beauty, knows what is beautiful by looking upon it; he stands in no need of a train of reasoning about the proportion of the features, in order to determine whether that which he sees be a beautiful countenance or no; he needs nothing, but only the glance of his eye. He who has a rectified musical ear, knows whether the sound he hears be true harmony; he does not need first to be at the trouble of the reasonings of a mathematician about the proportion of the notes. He that has a rectified palate knows what is good food, as soon as he tastes it, without the reasoning of a physician about it. There is a holy beauty and sweetness in words and actions, as well as a natural beauty in countenances and sounds, and sweetness in food: Job xii. 11, "Doth not the ear try words, and the mouth taste his meat?" When a holy and amiable action is suggested to the thoughts of a holy soul, that soul, if in the lively exercise of its spiritual taste, at once sees a beauty in it, and so inclines to it, and closes with it. On the contrary, if an unworthy, unholy action be suggested to it, its sanctified eye sees no beauty in it, and is not pleased with it; its sanctified taste relishes no sweetness in it, but on the contrary, it is nauseous to it. Yea, its holy taste and appetite leads it to think of that which is truly lovely, and naturally suggests it; as a healthy taste and appetite naturally suggests the idea of its proper object. Thus a holy person is led by the Spirit, as he is instructed and led by his holy taste and disposition of heart; whereby, in the lively exercise of grace, he easily distinguishes good and evil, and knows at once what is a suitable amiable behavior towards God, and towards man, in this case and the other, and judges what is right, as it were spontaneously, and of himself, without a particular deduction, by any other arguments than the beauty that is seen, and goodness that is tasted. Thus Christ blames the Pharisees, that they "did not, even of their own selves, judge what was right," without needing miracles to prove it, Luke xii. 57. The apostle seems plainly to have respect to this way of judging of spiritual beauty, in Rom. xii. 2: "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and perfect, and acceptable will of God."

There is such a thing as good taste of natural beauty (which learned men often speak of) that is exercised about temporal things, in judging of them; as about the justness of a speech, the goodness of style, the beauty of a poem, the gracefulness of deportment, &c. A late great philosopher of our nation, writes thus upon it:* "To have a taste, is to give things their real value, to be touched with the good, to be shocked with the ill; not to be dazzled with false lustres,

* Chambers' Dictionary, under the word TASTE.

out in spite of all colors, and every thing that might deceive or amuse, to judge soundly. Taste and judgment, then, should be the same thing; and yet it is easy to discern a difference. The judgment forms its opinions from reflection: the reason on this occasion fetches a kind of circuit, to arrive at its end; it supposes principles, it draws consequences, and it judges; but not without a thorough knowledge of the case; so that after it has pronounced, it is ready to render a reason of its decrees. Good taste observes none of these formalities; ere it has time to consult, it has taken its side; as soon as ever the object is presented, the impression is made, the sentiment formed, ask no more of it. As the ear is wounded with a harsh sound, as the smell is soothed with an agreeable odor, before ever the reason have meddled with those objects to judge of them, so the taste opens itself at once, and prevents all reflection. They may come afterwards to confirm it, and discover the secret reasons of its conduct; but it was not in its power to wait for them. Frequently it happens not to know them at all, and what pains soever it uses, cannot discover what it was determined it to think as it did. This conduct is very different from what the judgment observes in its decisions: unless we choose to say, that good taste is, as it were, a first motion, or a kind of instinct of right reason, which hurries on with rapidity, and conducts more securely, than all the reasonings she could make; it is a first glance of the eye, which discovers to us the nature and relations of things in a moment.

Now as there is such a kind of taste of the mind as this, which philosophers speak of, whereby persons are guided in their judgment, of the natural beauty, gracefulness, propriety, nobleness, and sublimity of speeches and action, whereby they judge as it were by the glance of the eye, or by inward sensation, and the first impression of the object; so there is likewise such a thing as a divine taste, given and maintained by the Spirit of God, in the hearts of the saints, whereby they are in like manner led and guided in discerning and distinguishing the true spiritual and holy beauty of actions; and that more easily, readily, and accurately, as they have more or less of the Spirit of God dwelling in them. And thus "the sons of God are led by the Spirit of God, in their behavior in the world."

A holy disposition and spiritual taste, where grace is strong and lively, will enable the soul to determine what actions are right and becoming Christians, not only more speedily, but far more exactly, than the greatest abilities without it. This may be illustrated by the manner in which some habits of mind, and dispositions of heart, of a nature inferior to true grace, will teach and guide a man in his actions. As for instance, if a man be a very good natured man, his good nature will teach him better how to act benevolently amongst mankind, and will direct him, on every occasion, to those speeches and actions, which are agreeable to rules of goodness, than the strongest reason will a man of a morose temper. So if a man's heart be under the influence of an entire friendship, and most endeared affection to another; though he be a man of an indifferent capacity, yet this habit of his mind will direct him, far more readily and exactly, to a speech and deportment, or manner of behavior, which shall in all respects be sweet and kind, and agreeable to a benevolent disposition of heart, than the greatest capacity without it. He has as it were a spirit within him, that guides him: the habit of his mind is attended with a taste, by which he immediately relishes that air and mien which is benevolent, and disrelishes the contrary, and causes him to distinguish between one and the other in a moment, more precisely, than the most accurate reasonings can find out in many hours. As the nature and inward tendency of a stone, or other heavy body, that is let fall from aloft, shows the way to the centre of the earth, more exactly in an instant, than the

ablest mathematician, without it, could determine, by his most accurate observations, in a whole day. Thus it is that a spiritual disposition and taste teaches and guides a man in his behavior in the world. So an eminently humble, or meek, or charitable disposition, will direct a person of mean capacity to such a behavior, as is agreeable to Christian rules of humility, meekness and charity, far more readily and precisely than the most diligent study, and elaborate reasonings, of a man of the strongest faculties, who has not a Christian spirit within him. So also will a spirit of love to God, and holy fear and reverence towards God, and filial confidence in God, and a heavenly disposition, teach and guide a man in his behavior.

It is an exceedingly difficult thing for a wicked man, destitute of Christian principles in his heart to guide him, to know how to demean himself like a Christian, with the life and beauty, and heavenly sweetness of a truly holy, humble, Christ-like behavior. He knows not how to put on these garments, neither do they fit him: Eccl. x. 2, 3, "A wise man's heart is at his right hand; but a fool's heart is at his left. Yea also, when he that is a fool walketh by the way, his wisdom faileth him, and he saith to every one that he is a fool;" with ver. 15, "The labor of the foolish wearieth every one of them, because he knoweth not how to go to the city." Prov. x. 32, "The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable." Chap. xv. 2, "The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright; but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness." And chap. xvi. 23, "The heart of the righteous teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips."

The saints in thus judging of actions by a spiritual taste, have not a particular recourse to express rules of God's word, with respect to every word and action that is before them, the good or evil of which they thus judge: but yet their taste itself, in general, is subject to the rule of God's word, and must be tried by that, and a right reasoning upon it. As a man of a rectified palate judges of particular morsels by his taste; but yet his palate itself must be judged of, whether it be right or no, by certain rules and reasons. But a spiritual taste of soul mightily helps the soul in its reasonings on the word of God, and in judging of the true meaning of its rules: as it removes the prejudices of a depraved appetite, and naturally leads the thoughts in the right channel, casts a light on the word of God, and causes the true meaning most naturally to come to mind, through the harmony there is between the disposition and relish of a sanctified soul, and the true meaning of the rules of God's word. Yea, this harmony tends to bring the texts themselves to mind, on proper occasions; as the particular state of the stomach and palate tends to bring such particular meats and drinks to mind, as are agreeable to that state. "Thus the children of God are led by the Spirit of God," in judging of actions themselves, and in their meditations upon, and judging of, and applying the rules of God's holy word: and so God "teaches them his statutes, and causes them to understand the way of his precepts;" which the Psalmist so often prays for.

But this leading of the Spirit is a thing exceedingly diverse from that which some call so; which consists not in teaching them God's statutes and precepts, that he has already given; but in giving them new precepts, by immediate inward speech or suggestion; and has in it no tasting the true excellency of things, or judging or discerning the nature of things at all. They do not determine what is the will of God by any taste or relish, or any manner of judging of the nature of things, but by an immediate dictate concerning the thing to be done; there is no such thing as any judgment or wisdom in the case. Whereas in that leading of the Spirit which is peculiar to God's children, is imparted that true wisdom, and holy discretion, so often spoken of in the word

of God; which is high above the other way, as the stars are higher than a glow worm; and that which Balaam and Saul (who sometimes were led by the Spirit in that other way) never had, and no natural man can have, without a change of nature.

What has been said of the nature of spiritual understanding, as consisting most essentially in a divine supernatural sense and relish of the heart, not only shows that there is nothing of it in this falsely supposed leading of the Spirit, which has been now spoken of; but also shows the difference between spiritual understanding, and all kinds and forms of enthusiasm, all imaginary sights of God, and Christ, and heaven, all supposed witnessing of the Spirit, and testimonies of the love of God by immediate inward suggestion: and all impressions of future events, and immediate revelations of any secret facts whatsoever; all enthusiastical impressions and applications of words of Scripture, as though they were words now immediately spoken by God to a particular person, in a new meaning, and carrying something more in them, than the words contain as they lie in the Bible; and all interpretations of the mystical meaning of the Scripture, by supposed immediate revelation. None of these things consists in a divine sense and relish of the heart, of the holy beauty and excellency of divine things; nor have they any thing to do with such a sense; but all consists in impressions in the head; all are to be referred to the head of impressions on the imagination, and consist in the exciting external ideas in the mind, either in ideas of outward shapes and colors, or words spoken, or letters written, or ideas of things external and sensible, belonging to actions done, or events accomplished or to be accomplished. An enthusiastical supposed manifestation of the love of God, is made by the exciting an idea of a smiling countenance, or some other pleasant outward appearance, or by the idea of pleasant words spoken, or written, excited in the imagination, or some pleasant bodily sensation. So when persons have an imaginary revelation of some secret fact, it is by exciting external ideas; either of some words, implying a declaration of that fact, or some visible or sensible circumstances of such a fact. So the supposed leading of the Spirit, to do the will of God, in outward behavior, is either by exciting the idea of words (which are outward things) in their minds, either the words of Scripture, or other words, which they look upon as an immediate command of God; or else by exciting and impressing strongly the ideas of the outward actions themselves. So when an interpretation of a Scripture type or allegory, is immediately, in an extraordinary way, strongly suggested, it is by suggesting words, as though one secretly whispered and told the meaning, or by exciting other ideas in the imagination.

Such sort of experiences and discoveries as these, commonly raise the affections of such as are deluded by them, to a great height, and make a mighty uproar in both soul and body. And a very great part of the false religion that has been in the world, from one age to another, consists in such discoveries as these, and in the affections that flow from them. In such things consisted the experiences of the ancient Pythagoreans among the heathen, and many others among them, who had strange ecstasies and raptures, and pretended to a divine afflatus, and immediate revelations from heaven. In such things as these seem to have consisted the experiences of the Essenes, an ancient sect among the Jews, at and after the time of the apostles. In such things as these consisted the experiences of many of the ancient Gnostics, and the Montanists, and many other sects of ancient heretics, in the primitive ages of the Christian church. And in such things as these consisted the pretended immediate converse with God and Christ, and saints and angels of heaven, of the Monks, Anchorites, and

Recluses, that formerly abounded in the Church of Rome. In such things consisted the pretended high experiences, and great spirituality of many sects of enthusiasts, that swarmed in the world after the Reformation; such as the Anabaptists, Antinomians, and Familists, the followers of N. Stork, Th. Muncer, Jo. Becold, Henry Pfeiser, David George, Casper Swenckfield, Henry Nicolas, Johannes Agrcola Eislebius; and the many wild enthusiasts that were in England in the days of Oliver Cromwell; and the followers of Mrs. Hutchison in New England; as appears by the particular and large accounts given of all these sects by that eminently holy man, Mr. Samuel Rutherford, in his "Display of the Spiritual Antichrist." And in such things as these consisted the experiences of the late French prophets, and their followers. And in these things seems to lie the religion of the many kinds of enthusiasts of the present day. It is by such sort of religion as this, chiefly, that Satan transforms himself into an angel of light: and it is that which he has ever most successfully made use of to confound hopeful and happy revivals of religion, from the beginning of the Christian church to this day. When the Spirit of God is poured out, to begin a glorious work, then the old serpent, as fast as possible, and by all means, introduces this bastard religion, and mingles it with the true; which has from time to time soon brought all things into confusion. The pernicious consequence of it is not easily imagined or conceived of, until we see and are amazed with the awful effects of it, and the dismal desolation it has made. If the revival of true religion be very great in its beginning, yet if this bastard comes in, there is danger of its doing as Gideon's bastard Abimelech did, who never left until he had slain all his threescore and ten true-born sons, excepting one, that was forced to fly. Great and strict therefore should be the watch and guard that ministers maintain against such things, especially at a time of great awakening: for men, especially the common people, are easily bewitched with such things; they having such a glaring and glistering show of high religion; and the devil hiding his own shape, and appearing as an angel of light, that men may not be afraid of him, but may adore him.

The imagination or phantasy seems to be that wherein are formed all those delusions of Satan, which those are carried away with, who are under the influence of false religion, and counterfeit graces and affections. Here is the devil's grand lurking place, the very nest of foul and delusive spirits. It is very much to be doubted, whether the devil can come at the soul of man at all to affect it, or to excite any thought or motion, or produce any effect whatsoever in it, any other way, than by the phantasy; which is that power of the soul, by which it receives, and is the subject of the species, or ideas of outward and sensible things. As to the laws and means which the Creator has established, for the intercourse and communication of unbodied spirits, we know nothing about them; we do not know by what medium they manifest their thoughts to each other, or excite thoughts in each other. But as to spirits that are united to bodies, those bodies God has united them to, are their medium of communication. They have no other medium of acting on other creatures, or being acted on by them, than the body. Therefore it is not to be supposed that Satan can excite any thought, or produce any effect in the soul of man, any otherwise, than by some motion of the animal spirits, or by causing some motion or alteration in something which appertains to the body. There is this reason to think that the devil cannot produce thoughts in the soul immediately, or any other way than by the medium of the body, viz., that he cannot immediately see or know the thoughts of the soul: it is abundantly declared in the Scripture, to be peculiar to the omniscient God to do that. But it is not likely that the devil can immediately

produce an effect, which is out of the reach of his immediate view. It seems unreasonable to suppose, that his immediate agency should be out of his own sight, or that it should be impossible for him to see what he himself immediately does. Is it not unreasonable to suppose, that any spirit or intelligent agent, should by the act of his will, produce effects according to his understanding, or agreeable to his own thoughts, and that immediately, and yet the effects produced be beyond the reach of his understanding, or where he can have no immediate perception or discerning at all? But if this be so, that the devil cannot produce thoughts in the soul immediately, or any other way than by the animal spirits, or by the body, then it follows, that he never brings to pass any thing in the soul, but by the imagination or phantasy, or by exciting external ideas. For we know that alterations in the body do immediately excite no other sort of ideas in the mind, but external ideas, or ideas of the outward senses, or ideas which are of the same outward nature. As to reflection, abstraction, reasoning, &c., and those thoughts and inward motions which are the fruits of these acts of the mind, they are not the next effects of impressions on the body. So that it must be only by the imagination, that Satan has access to the soul, to tempt and delude it, or suggest any thing to it.* And this seems to be the reason why persons that are under the disease of melancholy, are commonly so visibly and remarkably subject to the suggestions and temptations of Satan; that being a disease which peculiarly affects the animal spirits, and is attended with weakness of that part of the body which is the fountain of the animal spirits, even the brain, which is, as it were, the seat of the phantasy. It is by impressions made on the brain, that any ideas are excited in the mind, by the motion of the animal spirits, or any changes made in the body. The brain being thus weakened and diseased, it is less under the command of the higher faculties of the soul, and yields the more easily to extrinsic impressions, and is overpowered by the disordered motions of the animal spirits; and so the devil has greater advantage to affect the mind, by working on the imagination. And thus Satan, when he casts in those horrid suggestions into the minds of many melancholy persons, in which they have no hand themselves, he does it by exciting imaginary ideas, either of some dreadful words or sentences, or other horrid outward ideas. And when he tempts other persons who are not melancholy, he does it by presenting to the imagination, in a lively and alluring manner, the objects of their lusts, or by exciting ideas of words, and so by them exciting thoughts; or by promoting an imagination of outward actions, events, circumstances, &c. Innumerable are

* "The imagination is that room of the soul wherein the devil doth often appear. Indeed (to speak exactly) the devil hath no efficient power over the rational part of a man; he cannot change the will, he cannot alter the heart of a man. So that the utmost he can do, in tempting a man to sin, is by suasion and suggestion only. But how doth the devil do this? Even by working upon the imagination. He observeth the temper, and bodily constitution of a man; and thereupon suggests to his fancy, and injects his fiery darts thereinto, by which the mind will come to be wrought upon. The devil then, though he hath no imperious efficacy over thy will, yet because he can thus stir and move thy imagination, and thou being naturally destitute of grace, canst not withstand these suggestions: hence it is that any sin in thy imagination, though but in the outward works of the soul, yet doth quickly lay hold on all. And indeed, by this means, do arise those horrible delusions, that are in many erroneous ways of religion; all is because their imaginations are corrupted. Yea, how often are these diabolical delusions of the imagination taken for the gracious operation of God's Spirit! It is from hence that many have pretended to enthusiasms: they leave the Scriptures, and wholly attend to what they perceive and feel within them." *Burgess on Original Sin*, p. 369.

The great Turretine, speaking on that question, What is the power of angels? says, "As to bodies there is no doubt but that they can do a great deal upon all sorts of elementary and sublunary bodies, to move them locally and variously to agitate them. It is also certain, that they can act upon the external and internal senses, to excite them or to bind them. But as to the rational soul itself, they can do nothing immediately upon that; for to God alone, who knows and searches the hearts, and who has them in his hands, does it also appertain to bow and move them whithersoever he will. But angels can act upon the rational soul, only mediately, by imaginations." *Theolog. Elench.* Loc. VII. Quest. 7.

the ways by which the mind might be led on to all kind of evil thoughts, by exciting external ideas in the imagination.

If persons keep no guard at these avenues of Satan, by which he has access to the soul, to tempt and delude it, they will be likely to have enough of him. And especially, if instead of guarding against him, they lay themselves open to him, and seek and invite him, because he appears as an angel of light, and counterfeits the illuminations and graces of the Spirit of God, by inward whispers, and immediate suggestions of facts and events, pleasant voices, beautiful images, and other impressions on the imagination. There are many who are deluded by such things, and are lifted up with them, and seek after them, that have a continued course of them, and can have them almost when they will; and especially when their pride and vainglory has most occasion for them, to make a show of them before company. It is with them, something as it is with those who are professors of the art of telling where lost things are to be found, by impressions made on their imaginations; they laying themselves open to the devil, he is always on hand to give them the desired impression.

Before I finish what I would say on this head of imaginations, counterfeiting spiritual light, and affections arising from them, I would renewedly (to prevent misunderstanding of what has been said) desire it may be observed, that I am far from determining, that no affections are spiritual which are attended with imaginary ideas. Such is the nature of man, that he can scarcely think of any thing intensely, without some kind of outward ideas. They arise and interpose themselves unavoidably, in the course of a man's thoughts; though oftentimes they are very confused, and are not what the mind regards. When the mind is much engaged, and the thoughts intense, oftentimes the imagination is more strong, and the outward idea more lively, especially in persons of some constitutions of body. But there is a great difference between these two things, viz., lively imaginations arising from strong affections, and strong affections arising from lively imaginations. The former may be, and doubtless often is, in case of truly gracious affections. The affections do not arise from the imagination, nor have any dependence upon it; but on the contrary, the imagination is only the accidental effect, or consequent of the affection, through the infirmity of human nature. But when the latter is the case, as it often is, that the affection arises from the imagination, and is built upon it, as its foundation, instead of a spiritual illumination or discovery, then is the affection, however elevated, worthless and vain. And this is the drift of what has been now said, of impressions on the imagination. Having observed this, I proceed to another mark of gracious affections.

V. Truly gracious affections are attended with a reasonable and spiritual conviction of the judgment, of the reality and certainty of divine things.

This seems to be implied in the text that was laid as the foundation of this discourse: "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory."

All those who are truly gracious persons have a solid, full, thorough and effectual conviction of the truth of the great things of the gospel; I mean, that they no longer halt between two opinions; the great doctrines of the gospel cease to be any longer doubtful things, or matters of opinion, which, though probable, are yet disputable; but with them, they are points settled and determined, as undoubted and indisputable; so that they are not afraid to venture their all upon their truth. Their conviction is an effectual conviction; so that the great, spiritual, mysterious, and invisible things of the gospel, have the influence of real and certain things upon them; they have the weight and power of real

hings in their hearts; and accordingly rule in their affections, and govern them hrough the course of their lives. With respect to Christ's being the Son of God, and Saviour of the world, and the great things he has revealed concerning himself, and his Father, and another world, they have not only a predominating opinion that these things are true, and so yield their assent, as they do in many other matters of doubtful speculation; but they see that it is really so; their eyes are opened, so that they see that really Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. And as to the things which Christ has revealed, of God's eternal purposes and designs, concerning fallen man, and the glorious and everlasting things prepared for the saints in another world, they see that they are so indeed; and therefore these things are of great weight with them, and have a mighty power upon their hearts, and influence over their practice, in some measure answerable to their infinite importance.

That all true Christians have such a kind of conviction of the truth of the things of the gospel, is abundantly manifest from the Holy Scriptures. I will mention a few places of many: Matt. xvi. 15, 16, 17, "But whom say ye that I am? Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona; —My Father which is in heaven hath revealed it unto thee." John vi. 68, 69, "Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." John xvii. 6, 7, 8, "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me, are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me." Acts viii. 37, "If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest." 2. Cor. iv. 11, 12, 13, 14, "We which live, are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake.—Death worketh in us.—We having the spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak; knowing, that he which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you." Together with ver. 16, "For which cause we faint not." And ver. 18, "While we look not at the things which are seen," &c. And chap. v. 1, "For we know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God." And ver. 6, 7, 8, "Therefore we are always confident, knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord; for we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord." 2 Tim. i. 12, "For the which cause I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." Heb. iii. 6, "Whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." Heb. xi. 1, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen;" together with that whole chapter. 1 John iv. 13, 14, 15, 16, "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. And we have seen, and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us." Chap. v. 4, 5, "For whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"

Therefore truly gracious affections are attended with such a kind of conviction and persuasion of the truth of the things of the gospel, and sight of their evidence and reality, as these and other Scriptures speak of.

There are many religious affections, which are not attended with such a conviction of the judgment. There are many apprehensions and ideas which some have, that they call divine discoveries, which are affecting, but not convincing. Though for a little while they may seem to be more persuaded of the truth of the things of religion than they used to be, and may yield a forward assent, like many of Christ's hearers, who believed for a while; yet they have no thorough and effectual conviction; nor is there any great abiding change in them, in this respect, that whereas formerly they did not realize the great things of the gospel, now these things, with regard to reality and certainty, appear new to them, and they behold them, quite in another view than they used to do. There are many persons who have been exceedingly raised with religious affections, and think they have been converted, that do not go about the world any more convinced of the truth of the gospel, than they used to be; or at least, there is no remarkable alteration: they are not men who live under the influence and power of a realizing conviction of the infinite and eternal things which the gospel reveals; if they were, it would be impossible for them to live as they do. Because their affections are not attended with a thorough conviction of the mind, they are not at all to be depended on; however great a show and noise they make, it is like the blaze of tow, or crackling of thorns, or like the forward flourishing blade on stony ground, that has no root, nor deepness of earth to maintain its life.

Some persons, under high affections, and a confident persuasion of their good estate, have that, which they very ignorantly call a seeing the truth of the word of God, and which is very far from it, after this manner; they have some text of Scripture coming to their minds in a sudden and extraordinary manner, immediately declaring unto them (as they suppose) that their sins are forgiven, or that God loves them, and will save them; and it may be, have a chain of Scriptures coming one after another, to the same purpose; and they are convinced that it is truth; i. e., they are confident that it is certainly so, that their sins are forgiven, and God does love them, &c.—they say they know it is so; and when the words of Scripture are suggested to them, and as they suppose immediately spoken to them by God, in this meaning, they are ready to cry out, Truth, truth! It is certainly so! The word of God is true! And this they call a seeing the truth of the word of God. Whereas the whole of their faith amounts to no more, than only a strong confidence of their own good estate, and so a confidence that these words are true, which they suppose tell them they are in a good estate: when indeed (as was shown before) there is no Scripture which declares that any person is in a good estate directly, or any other way than by consequence. So that this, instead of being a real sight of the truth of the word of God, is a sight of nothing but a phantom, and is wholly a delusion. Truly to see the truth of the word of God, is to see the truth of the gospel; which is the glorious doctrine the word of God contains, concerning God, and Jesus Christ, and the way of salvation by him, and the world of glory that he is entered into, and purchased for all them who believe; and not a revelation that such and such particular persons are true Christians, and shall go to heaven. Therefore those affections which arise from no other persuasion of the truth of the word of God than this, arise from delusion, and not true conviction; and consequently are themselves delusive and vain.

But if the religious affections that persons have, do indeed arise from a

trong persuasion of the truth of the Christian religion, their affections are not he better, unless their persuasion be a reasonable persuasion or conviction. By a reasonable conviction, I mean, a conviction founded on real evidence, or ipon that which is a good reason, or just ground of conviction. Men may ıave a strong persuasion that the Christian religion is true, when their persuaion is not at all built on evidence, but altogether on education, and the opinion of thers; as many Mahometans are strongly persuaded of the truth of the Maometan religion, because their fathers, and neighbors, and nation believe it. That belief of the truth of the Christian religion, which is built on the very ame grounds with a Mahometan's belief of the Mahometan religion, is the ame sort of belief. And though the thing believed happens to be better, et that does not make the belief itself to be of a better sort; for though the hing believed happens to be true, yet the belief of it is not owing to this truth, ut to education. So that as the conviction is no better than the Mahometan's onviction; so the affections that flow from it, are no better in themselves, than he religious affections of Mahometans.

But if that belief of Christian doctrines, which persons' affections arise from, e not merely from education, but indeed from reasons and arguments which are ffered, it will not from thence necessarily follow, that their affections are truly racious: for in order to that, it is requisite not only that the belief which their ffections arise from, should be a reasonable, but also a spiritual belief or conviction. I suppose none will doubt but that some natural men do yield a ind of assent of their judgments to the truth of the Christian religion, from the ational proofs or arguments that are offered to evince it. Judas, without doubt, hought Jesus to be the Messiah, from the things which he saw and heard; but et all along was a devil. So in John ii. 23, 24, 25, we read of many that beieved in Christ's name, when they saw the miracles that he did; whom yet Christ knew had not that within them, which was to be depended on. So Simon the sorcerer believed, when he beheld the miracles and signs which were lone; but yet remained in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity, Acts viii. 3, 23. And if there is such a belief or assent of the judgment in some natural nen, none can doubt but that religious affections may arise from that assent or elief; as we read of some who believed for a while, that were greatly affected, nd anon with joy received the word.

It is evident that there is such a thing as a spiritual belief or conviction of he truth of the things of the gospel, or a belief that is peculiar to those who re spiritual, or who are regenerated, and have the Spirit of God, in his holy ommunications, and dwelling in them as a vital principle. So that the conviction they have, does not only differ from that which natural men have, in its oncomitants, in that it is accompanied with good works; but the belief itself s diverse, the assent and conviction of the judgment is of a kind peculiar to hose who are spiritual, and that which natural men are wholly destitute of. This is evident by the Scripture, if any thing at all is so: John xvii. 8, "They ıave believed that thou didst send me." Tit. i. 1, "According to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness." John vi. 27, "The Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have elieved that I came out from God." 1 John iv. 15, "Whosoever shall confess hat Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God." Chap. v. 1, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God." Ver. 10, "He hat believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself."

What a spiritual conviction of the judgment is, we are naturally led to determine from what has been said already, under the former head of a spiritual

understanding. The conviction of the judgment arises from the illumination of the understanding; the passing of a right judgment on things, depends on having a right apprehension or idea of things. And therefore it follows, that a spiritual conviction of the truth of the great things of the gospel, is such a conviction, as arises from having a spiritual view or apprehension of those things in the mind. And this is also evident from the Scripture, which often represents, that a saving belief of the reality and divinity of the things proposed and exhibited to us in the gospel, is from the Spirit of God's enlightening the mind, to have right apprehensions of the nature of those things, and so as it were unveiling things, or revealing them, and enabling the mind to view them and see them as they are. Luke x. 21, 22, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him." John vi. 40, "And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life." Where it is plain, that true faith arises from a spiritual sight of Christ. And John xvii. 6, 7, 8, "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me, are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me." Where Christ's manifesting God's name to the disciples, or giving them a true apprehension and view of divine things, was that whereby they knew that Christ's doctrine was of God, and that Christ himself was of him, and was sent by him: Matt. xvi. 16, 17, "Simon Peter said, Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." 1 John v. 10, "He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself." Gal. i. 14, 15, 16, "Being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood."

If it be so, that that is a spiritual conviction of the divinity and reality of the things exhibited in the gospel, which arises from a spiritual understanding of those things; I have shown already what that is, viz., a sense and taste of the divine, supreme, and holy excellency and beauty of those things. So that then is the mind spiritually convinced of the divinity and truth of the great things of the gospel, when that conviction arises, either directly or remotely, from such a sense or view of their divine excellency and glory as is there exhibited. This clearly follows, from things that have been already said: and for this the Scripture is very plain and express, 2 Cor. iv. 3—6: "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ." Together with the last verse of the foregoing chapter, which introduces this, "but we all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory

of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." Nothing can be more evident, than that a saving belief of the gospel is here spoken of, by the apostle, as arising from the mind's being enlightened to behold the divine glory of the things it exhibits.

This view or sense of the divine glory, and unparalleled beauty of the things exhibited to us in the gospel, has a tendency to convince the mind of their divinity, two ways; directly, and more indirectly, and remotely. 1. A view of this divine glory directly convinces the mind of the divinity of these things, as this glory is in itself a direct, clear, and all-conquering evidence of it; especially when clearly discovered, or when this supernatural sense is given in a good degree.

He that has his judgment thus directly convinced and assured of the divinity of the things of the gospel, by a clear view of their divine glory, has a reasonable conviction; his belief and assurance is altogether agreeable to reason; because the divine glory and beauty of divine things is, in itself, real evidence of the divinity, and the most direct and strong evidence. He that truly sees the divine transcendent, supreme glory of those things which are divine, does as it were know their divinity intuitively: he not only argues that they are divine, but he sees that they are divine; he sees that in them wherein divinity chiefly consists, for in this glory, which is so vastly and inexpressibly distinguished from the glory of artificial things, and all other glory, does mainly consist the true notion of divinity. God is God, and distinguished from all other beings, and exalted above them, chiefly by his divine beauty, which is infinitely diverse from all other beauty.—They therefore that see the stamp of this glory in divine things, they see divinity in them, they see God in them, and see them to be divine; because they see that in them wherein the truest idea of divinity does consist. Thus a soul may have a kind of intuitive knowledge of the divinity of the things exhibited in the gospel; not that he judges the doctrines of the gospel to be from God, without any argument or deduction at all; but it is without any long chain of arguments; the argument is but one, and the evidence direct; the mind ascends to the truth of the gospel but by one step, and that is its divine glory.

It would be very strange, if any professing Christian should deny it to be possible, that there should be an excellency in divine things, which is so transcendent, and exceedingly different from what is in other things, that if it were seen, would evidently distinguish them. We cannot rationally doubt, but that things that are divine, that appertain to the Supreme Being, are vastly different from things that are human: that there is a Godlike, high, and glorious excellency in them, that does so distinguish them from the things which are of men, that the difference is ineffable; and therefore such as, if seen, will have a most convincing, satisfying influence upon any one, that they are what they are, viz., divine. Doubtless there is that glory and excellency in the divine Being, by which he is so infinitely distinguished from all other beings, that if it were seen, he might be known by it. It would therefore be very unreasonable to deny, that it is possible for God to give manifestations of this distinguishing excellency, in things by which he is pleased to make himself known; and that this distinguishing excellency may be clearly seen in them. There are natural excellencies, that are very evidently distinguishing of the subjects or authors, to any one who beholds them. How vastly is the speech of an understanding man different from that of a little child! And how greatly distinguished is the speech of some men of great genius, as Homer, Cicero, Milton, Locke, Addison, and others, from that of many other understanding men! There

are no limits to be set to the degrees of manifestation of mental excellency, that there may be in speech. But the appearances of the natural perfections of God, in the manifestations he makes of himself, may doubtless be unspeakably more evidently distinguishing, than the appearances of those excellencies of worms of the dust, in which they differ one from another. He that is well acquainted with mankind, and their works, by viewing the sun, may know it is no human work. And it is reasonable to suppose, that when Christ comes at the end of the world, in the glory of his Father, it will be with such ineffable appearances of divinity, as will leave no doubt to the inhabitants of the world, even the most obstinate infidels, that he who appears is a divine person. But above all, do the manifestations of the moral and spiritual glory of the divine Being (which is the proper beauty of the divinity) bring their own evidence, and tend to assure the heart. Thus the disciples were assured that Jesus was the Son of God, "for they beheld his glory, as the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth," John i. 14. When Christ appeared in the glory of his transfiguration to his disciples, with that outward glory to their bodily eyes, which was a sweet and admirable symbol and semblance of his spiritual glory, together with his spiritual glory itself, manifested to their minds; the manifestation of glory was such, as did perfectly, and with good reason, assure them of his divinity; as appears by what one of them, viz., the Apostle Peter, says concerning it, 2 Pet. i. 16, 17, 18, "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father, honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount." The apostle calls that mount, the holy mount, because the manifestations of Christ which were there made to their minds, and which their minds were especially impressed and ravished with, were the glory of his holiness, or the beauty of his moral excellency; or, as another of these disciples, who saw it, expresses it, "his glory, as full of grace and truth."

Now this distinguishing glory of the divine Being has its brightest appearance and manifestation, in the things proposed and exhibited to us in the gospel, the doctrines there taught, the word there spoken, and the divine counsels, acts and works there revealed. These things have the clearest, most admirable, and distinguishing representations and exhibitions of the glory of God's moral perfections, that ever were made to the world. And if there be such a distinguishing, evidential manifestation of divine glory in the gospel, it is reasonable to suppose that there may be such a thing as seeing it. What should hinder but that it may be seen? It is no argument that it cannot be seen, that some do not see it; though they may be discerning men in temporal matters. If there be such ineffable, distinguishing, evidential excellencies in the gospel, it is reasonable to suppose, that they are such as are not to be discerned, but by the special influence and enlightenings of the Spirit of God. There is need of uncommon force of mind to discern the distinguishing excellencies of the works of authors of great genius: those things in Milton, which, to mean judges, appear tasteless and imperfections, are his inimitable excellencies in the eyes of those, who are of greater discerning and better taste. And if there be a book, which God is the author of, it is most reasonable to suppose, that the distinguishing glories of his word are of such a kind, as that the corruption of men's hearts, which above all things alienates men from the Deity, and makes the heart dull and stupid to any sense or taste of those things wherein the moral

glory of the divine perfections consists: I say, it is but reasonable to suppose, that this would blind men from discerning the beauties of such a book; and that therefore they will not see them, but as God is pleased to enlighten them, and restore a holy taste, to discern and relish divine beauties.

This sense of the spiritual excellency and beauty of divine things, does also tend directly to convince the mind of the truth of the gospel, as there are very many of the most important things declared in the gospel, that are hid from the eyes of natural men, the truth of which does in effect consist in this excellency, or does so immediately depend upon it, and result from it, that in this excellency's being seen, the truth of those things is seen. As soon as ever the eyes are opened to behold the holy beauty and amiableness that is in divine things, a multitude of most important doctrines of the gospel that depend upon it (which all appear strange and dark to natural men) are at once seen to be true. As for instance, hereby appears the truth of what the word of God declares concerning the exceeding evil of sin; for the same eye that discerns the transcendent beauty of holiness, necessarily therein sees the exceeding odiousness of sin: the same taste which relishes the sweetness of true moral good, tastes the bitterness of moral evil. And by this means a man sees his own sinfulness and loathsomeness; for he has now a sense to discern objects of this nature; and so sees the truth of what the word of God declares concerning the exceeding sinfulness of mankind, which before he did not see. He now sees the dreadful pollution of his heart, and the desperate depravity of his nature, in a new manner; for his soul has now a sense given it to feel the pain of such a disease; and this shows him the truth of what the Scripture reveals concerning the corruption of man's nature, his original sin, and the ruinous, undone condition man is in, and his need of a Saviour, his need of the mighty power of God to renew his heart and change his nature. Men, by seeing the true excellency of holiness, do see the glory of all those things, which both reason and Scripture show to be in the divine Being; for it has been shown, that the glory of them depends on this: and hereby they see the truth of all that the Scripture declares concerning God's glorious excellency and majesty, his being the fountain of all good, the only happiness of the creature, &c. And this again shows the mind the truth of what the Scripture teaches concerning the evil of sin against so glorious a God; and also the truth of what it teaches concerning sin's just desert of that dreadful punishment which it reveals; and also concerning the impossibility of our offering any satisfaction, or sufficient atonement for that which is so infinitely evil and heinous. And this again shows the truth of what the Scripture reveals concerning the necessity of a Saviour, to offer an atonement of infinite value for sin. And this sense of spiritual beauty that has been spoken of, enables the soul to see the glory of those things which the gospel reveals concerning the person of Christ; and so enables to see the exceeding beauty and dignity of his person, appearing in what the gospel exhibits of his word, works, acts, and life: and this apprehension of the superlative dignity of his person shows the truth of what the gospel declares concerning the value of his blood and righteousness, and so the infinite excellency of that offering he has made to God for us, and so its sufficiency to atone for our sins, and recommend us to God. And thus the Spirit of God discovers the way of salvation by Christ; thus the soul sees the fitness and suitableness of this way of salvation, the admirable wisdom of the contrivance, and the perfect answerableness of the provision that the gospel exhibits (as made for us) to our necessities. A sense of true divine beauty being given to the soul, the soul discerns the beauty of every part of the gospel scheme. This also shows the soul the truth of what the word of God declares

concerning man's chief happiness, as consisting in holy exercises and enjoyments. This shows the truth of what the gospel declares concerning the unspeakable glory of the heavenly state. And what the prophecies of the Old Testament, and the writings of the apostles declare concerning the glory of the Messiah's kingdom, is now all plain; and also what the Scripture teaches concerning the reasons and grounds of our duty. The truth of all these things revealed in the Scripture, and many more that might be mentioned, appears to the soul, only by imparting that spiritual taste of divine beauty, which has been spoken of; they being hidden things to the soul before.

And besides all this, the truth of all those things which the Scripture says about experimental religion, is hereby known; for they are now experienced. And this convinces the soul, that one who knew the heart of man, better than we know our own hearts, and perfectly knew the nature of virtue and holiness, was the author of the Scriptures. And the opening to view, with such clearness, such a world of wonderful and glorious truth in the gospel, that before was unknown, being quite above the view of a natural eye, but now appearing so clear and bright, has a powerful and invincible influence on the soul, to persuade of the divinity of the gospel.

Unless men may come to a reasonable, solid persuasion and conviction of the truth of the gospel, by the internal evidences of it, in the way that has been spoken, viz., by a sight of its glory; it is impossible that those who are illiterate, and unacquainted with history, should have any thorough and effectual conviction of it at all. They may without this, see a great deal of probability of it; it may be reasonable for them to give much credit to what learned men and historians tell them; and they may tell them so much, that it may look very probable and rational to them, that the Christian religion is true; and so much that they would be very unreasonable not to entertain this opinion. But to have a conviction, so clear, and evident, and assuring, as to be sufficient to induce them, with boldness to sell all, confidently and fearlessly to run the venture of the loss of all things, and of enduring the most exquisite and long continued torments, and to trample the world under foot, and count all things but dung for Christ; the evidence they can have from history, cannot be sufficient. It is impossible that men, who have not something of a general view of the historical world, or the series of history from age to age, should come at the force of arguments for the truth of Christianity, drawn from history, to that degree, as effectually to induce them to venture their all upon it. After all that learned men have said to them, there will remain innumerable doubts on their minds; they will be ready, when pinched with some great trial of their faith, to say, "How do I know this, or that? How do I know when these histories were written? Learned men tell me these histories were so and so attested in the day of them; but how do I know that there were such attestations then? They tell me there is equal reason to believe these facts, as any whatsoever that are related at such a distance; but how do I know that other facts which are related of those ages, ever were? Those who have not something of a general view of the series of historical events, and of the state of mankind from age to age, cannot see the clear evidence from history, of the truth of facts, in distant ages; but there will endless doubts and scruples remain.

But the gospel was not given only for learned men. There are at least nineteen in twenty, if not ninety-nine in a hundred, of those for whom the Scriptures were written, that are not capable of any certain or effectual conviction of the divine authority of the Scriptures, by such arguments as learned men make use of. If men who have been brought up in Heathenism, must wait for a clear

and certain conviction of the truth of Christianity, until they have learning and acquaintance with the histories of politer nations, enough to see clearly the force of such kind of arguments; it will make the evidence of the gospel to them immensely cumbersome, and will render the propagation of the gospel among them infinitely difficult. Miserable is the condition of the Houssatunnuck Indians, and others, who have lately manifested a desire to be instructed in Christianity, if they can come at no evidence of the truth of Christianity, sufficient to induce them to sell all for Christ, in any other way but this.

It is unreasonable to suppose, that God has provided for his people no more than probable evidence of the truth of the gospel. He has with great care, abundantly provided, and given them, the most convicting, assuring, satisfying and manifold evidence of his faithfulness in the covenant of grace; and as David says, "made a covenant, ordered in all things and sure." Therefore it is rational to suppose, that at the same time, he would not fail of ordering the matter so, that there should not be wanting, as great, and clear evidence, that this is his covenant, and that these promises are his promises; or, which is the same thing, that the Christian religion is true, and that the gospel is his word. Otherwise in vain are those great assurances he has given of his faithfulness in his covenant, by confirming it with his oath, and so variously establishing it by seals and pledges. For the evidence that it is his covenant, is properly the foundation on which all the force and effect of those other assurances do stand. We may therefore undoubtedly suppose and conclude, that there is some sort of evidence which God has given, that this covenant, and these promises are his, beyond all mere probability; that there are some grounds of assurance of it held forth, which, if we were not blind to them, tend to give a higher persuasion, than any arguing from history, human tradition, &c., which the illiterate and unacquainted with history are capable of; yea, that which is good ground of the highest and most perfect assurance, that mankind have in any case whatsoever, agreeable to those high expressions which the apostle uses, Heb. x. 22, "Let us draw near in full assurance of faith." And Col. ii. 2, "That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ." It is reasonable to suppose, that God would give the greatest evidence of those things which are greatest, and the truth of which is of greatest importance to us: and that we therefore, if we are wise, and act rationally, shall have the greatest desire of having full, undoubting and perfect assurance of. But it is certain, that such an assurance is not to be attained by the greater part of them who live under the gospel, by arguments fetched from ancient traditions, histories, and monuments.

And if we come to fact and experience, there is not the least reason to suppose, that one in a hundred of those who have been sincere Christians, and have had a heart to sell all for Christ, have come by their conviction of the truth of the gospel this way. If we read over the histories of the many thousands that died martyrs for Christ, since the beginning of the Reformation, and have cheerfully undergone extreme tortures in a confidence of the truth of the gospel, and consider their circumstances and advantages; how few of them were there, that we can reasonably suppose, ever came by their assured persuasion this way; or indeed for whom it was possible, reasonably to receive so full and strong an assurance, from such arguments! Many of them were weak women and children, and the greater part of them illiterate persons, many of whom had been brought up in popish ignorance and darkness, and were but newly come out of it, and lived and died in times wherein those arguments for the truth of Christianity,

from antiquity and history, had been but very imperfectly handled. And indeed, it is but very lately that these arguments have been set in a clear and convincing light, even by learned men themselves: and since it has been done, there never were fewer thorough believers among those who have been educated in the true religion; infidelity never prevailed so much, in any age, as in this, wherein these arguments are handled to the greatest advantage.

The true martyrs of Jesus Christ, are not those who have only been strong in opinion that the gospel of Christ is true, but those that have seen the truth of it; as the very name of martyrs or witnesses (by which they are called in Scripture) implies. Those are very improperly called witnesses of the truth of any thing, who only declare they are very much of opinion that such a thing is true. Those only are proper witnesses, who can, and do testify, that they have seen the truth of the thing they assert: John iii. 11, "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen." John i. 34, "And I saw and bare record, that this is the Son of God." 1 John iv. 14, "And we have seen and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." Acts xxii. 14, 15, "The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldst know his will, and see that just one, and shouldst hear the voice of his mouth; for thou shalt be his witness unto all men, of what thou hast seen and heard." But the true martyrs of Jesus Christ are called his witnesses; and all the saints, who by their holy practice under great trials, declare that faith, which is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen, are called witnesses, Heb. xi. 1, and xii. 1, because by their profession and practice, they declare their assurance of the truth and divinity of the gospel, having had the eyes of their minds enlightened to see divinity in the gospel, or to behold that unparalleled, ineffably excellent, and truly divine glory shining in it, which is altogether distinguishing, evidential, and convincing: so that they may truly be said to have seen God in it, and to have seen that it is indeed divine; and so can speak in the style of witnesses; and not only say, that they think the gospel is divine, but say, that it is divine, giving it in as their testimony, because they have seen it to be so. Doubtless Peter, James and John, after they had seen that excellent glory of Christ in the mount, would have been ready, when they came down, to speak in the language of witnesses, and to say positively that Jesus is the Son of God; as Peter says, they were eyewitnesses, 2 Pet. i. 16. And so all nations will be ready positively to say this, when they shall behold his glory at the day of judgment; though what will be universally seen, will be only his natural glory, and not his moral and spiritual glory, which is much more distinguishing. But yet it must be noted, that among those who have a spiritual sight of the divine glory of the gospel, there is a great variety of degrees of strength of faith, as there is a vast variety of the degrees of clearness of views of this glory: but there is no true and saving faith, or spiritual conviction of the judgment, of the truth of the gospel, that has nothing in it, of this manifestation of its internal evidence in some degree. The gospel of the blessed God does not go abroad a begging for its evidence, so much as some think; it has its highest and most proper evidence in itself. Though great use may be made of external arguments, they are not to be neglected, but highly prized and valued; for they may be greatly serviceable to awaken unbelievers, and bring them to serious consideration, and to confirm the faith of true saints; yea, they may be in some respect subservient to the begetting of a saving faith in men. Though what was said before remains true, that there is no spiritual conviction of the judgment, but what arises from an apprehension of the spiritual beauty and glory of divine things: for, as has been observed, this apprehension or view has a

tendency to convince the mind of the truth of the gospel, two ways, either directly or indirectly. Having therefore already observed how it does this directly, I proceed now,

2. To observe how a view of this divine glory does convince the mind of the truth of Christianity, more indirectly.

First, It doth so, as the prejudices of the heart against the truth of divine things are hereby removed, so that the mind thereby lies open to the force of the reasons which are offered. The mind of man is naturally full of enmity against the doctrines of the gospel; which is a disadvantage to those arguments that prove their truth, and causes them to lose their force upon the mind; but when a person has discovered to him the divine excellency of Christian doctrines, this destroys that enmity, and removes the prejudices, and sanctifies the reason, and causes it to be open and free. Hence is a vast difference, as to the force that arguments have to convince the mind. Hence was the very different effect, which Christ's miracles had to convince the disciples, from what they had to convince the Scribes and Pharisees: not that they had a stronger reason, or had their reason more improved; but their reason was sanctified, and those blinding prejudices, which the Scribes and Pharisees were under, were removed by the sense they had of the excellency of Christ and his doctrine.

Secondly, It not only removes the hinderances of reason, but positively helps reason. It makes even the speculative notions more lively. It assists and engages the attention of the mind to that kind of objects which causes it to have a clearer view of them, and more clearly to see their mutual relations. The ideas themselves, which otherwise are dim and obscure, by this means have a light cast upon them, and are impressed with greater strength, so that the mind can better judge of them; as he that beholds the objects on the face of the earth, when the light of the sun is cast upon them, is under greater advantage to discern them, in their true forms, and mutual relations, and to see the evidences of divine wisdom and skill in their contrivance, than he that sees them in a dim starlight, or twilight.

What has been said, may serve in some measure to show the nature of a spiritual conviction of the judgment of the truth and reality of divine things; and so to distinguish truly gracious affections from others; for gracious affections are evermore attended with such a conviction of the judgment.

But before I dismiss this head, it will be needful to observe the ways whereby some are deceived, with respect to this matter; and take notice of several things, that are sometimes taken for a spiritual and saving belief of the truth of the things of religion, which are indeed very diverse from it.

1. There is a degree of conviction of the truth of the great things of religion, that arises from the common enlightenings of the Spirit of God. That more lively and sensible apprehension of the things of religion, with respect to what is natural in them, such as natural men have who are under awakenings and common illuminations, will give some degree of conviction of the truth of divine things, beyond what they had before they were thus enlightened. For hereby they see the manifestations there are, in the revelation made in the holy Scriptures, and things exhibited in that revelation, of the natural perfections of God; such as his greatness, power, and awful majesty; which tends to convince the mind, that this is the word of a great and terrible God. From the tokens there are of God's greatness and majesty in his word and works, which they have a great sense of, from the common influence of the Spirit of God, they may have a much greater conviction that these are indeed the words and works of a very great invisible Being. And the lively apprehension of the greatness of God,

which natural men may have, tends to make them sensible of the great guilt, which sin against such a God brings, and the dreadfulness of his wrath for sin. And this tends to cause them more easily and fully to believe the revelation the Scripture makes of another world, and of the extreme misery it threatens, there to be inflicted on sinners. And so from that sense of the great natural good there is in the things of religion, which is sometimes given in common illuminations, men may be the more induced to believe the truth of religion. These things persons may have, and yet have no sense of the beauty and amiableness of the moral and holy excellency that is in the things of religion; and therefore no spiritual conviction of their truth. But yet such convictions are sometimes mistaken for saving convictions, and the affections flowing from them, for saving affections.

2. The extraordinary impressions which are made on the imaginations of some persons, in the visions and immediate strong impulses and suggestions that they have, as though they saw sights, and had words spoken to them, may, and often do beget a strong persuasion of the truth of invisible things. Though the general tendency of such things, in their final issue, is to draw men off from the word of God, and to cause them to reject the gospel, and to establish unbelief and Atheism; yet for the present, they may, and often do beget a confident persuasion of the truth of some things that are revealed in the Scriptures; however their confidence is founded in delusion, and so nothing worth. As for instance, if a person has by some invisible agent, immediately and strongly impressed on his imagination, the appearance of a bright light, and glorious form of a person seated on a throne, with great external majesty and beauty, uttering some remarkable words, with great force and energy; the person who is the subject of such an operation, may be from hence confident, that there are invisible agents, spiritual beings, from what he has experienced, knowing that he had no hand himself in this extraordinary effect, which he has experienced: and he may also be confident, that this is Christ whom he saw and heard speaking: and this may make him confident that there is a Christ, and that Christ reigns on a throne in heaven, as he saw him; and may be confident that the words which he heard him speak are true, &c.—In the same manner, as the lying miracles of the Papists may, for the present, beget in the minds of the ignorant deluded people, a strong persuasion of the truth of many things declared in the New Testament. Thus when the images of Christ, in Popish churches, are on some extraordinary occasions, made by priestcraft to appear to the people as if they wept, and shed fresh blood, and moved, and uttered such and such words; the people may be verily persuaded that it is a miracle wrought by Christ himself; and from thence may be confident there is a Christ, and that what they are told of his death and sufferings, and resurrection, and ascension, and present government or the world is true; for they may look upon this miracle, as a certain evidence of all these things, and a kind of ocular demonstration of them. This may be the influence of these lying wonders for the present; though the general tendency of them is not to convince that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, but finally to promote Atheism. Even the intercourse which Satan has with witches, and their often experiencing his immediate power, has a tendency to convince them of the truth of some of the doctrines of religion; as particularly the reality of an invisible world, or world of spirits, contrary to the doctrine of the Sadducees. The general tendency of Satan's influence is delusion: but yet he may mix some truth with his lies, that his lies may not be so easily discovered.

There are multitudes that are deluded with a counterfeit faith, from impressions on their imagination, in the manner which has been now spoken of. They

say they know that there is a God, for they have seen him; they know that Christ is the Son of God, for they have seen him in his glory; they know that Christ died for sinners, for they have seen him hanging on the cross, and his blood running from his wounds; they know there is a heaven and a hell, for they have seen the misery of the damned souls in hell, and the glory of saints and angels in heaven (meaning some external representations, strongly impressed on their imagination); they know that the Scriptures are the word of God, and that such and such promises in particular are his word, for they have heard him speak them to them, they came to their minds suddenly and immediately from God, without their having any hand in it.

3. Persons may seem to have their belief of the truth of the things of religion greatly increased, when the foundation of it is only a persuasion they have received of their interest in them. They first, by some means or other, take up a confidence, that if there be a Christ and heaven, they are theirs; and this prejudices them more in favor of the truth of them. When they hear of the great and glorious things of religion, it is with this notion, that all these things belong to them; and hence easily become confident that they are true; they look upon it to be greatly for their interest that they should be true. It is very obvious what a strong influence men's interest and inclinations have on their judgments. While a natural man thinks, that if there be a heaven and hell, the latter, and not the former, belongs to him; then he will be hardly persuaded that there is a heaven or hell: but when he comes to be persuaded, that hell belongs only to other folks, and not to him, then he can easily allow the reality of hell, and cry out of others' senselessness and sottishness in neglecting means of escape from it: and being confident that he is a child of God, and that God has promised heaven to him, he may seem strong in the faith of its reality, and may have a great zeal against that infidelity which denies it.

But I proceed to another distinguishing sign of gracious affections.

VI. Gracious affections are attended with evangelical humiliation.

Evangelical humiliation is a sense that a Christian has of his own utter insufficiency, despicableness, and odiousnesss, with an answerable frame of heart.

There is a distinction to be made between a legal and evangelical humiliation. The former is what men may be the subjects of, while they are yet in a state of nature, and have no gracious affections; the latter is peculiar to true saints: the former is from the common influence of the Spirit of God, assisting natural principles, and especially natural conscience; the latter is from the special influences of the Spirit of God, implanting and exercising supernatural and divine principles: the former is from the mind's being assisted to a greater sense of the things of religion, as to their natural properties and qualities, and particularly of the natural perfections of God, such as his greatness, terrible majesty, &c., which were manifested to the congregation of Israel, in giving the law at mount Sinai; the latter is from a sense of the transcendent beauty of divine things in their moral qualities: in the former, a sense of the awful greatness, and natural perfections of God, and of the strictness of his law, convinces men that they are exceeding sinful, and guilty, and exposed to the wrath of God, as it will wicked men and devils at the day of judgment; but they do not see their own odiousness on the account of sin; they do not see the hateful nature of sin; a sense of this is given in evangelical humiliation, by a discovery of the beauty of God's holiness and moral perfection. In a legal humiliation, men are made sensible that they are little and nothing before the great and terrible God, and that they are undone, and wholly insufficient to help themselves; as wicked

men will be at the day of judgment: but they have not an answerable frame of heart, consisting in a disposition to abase themselves, and exalt God alone; this disposition is given only in evangelical humiliation, by overcoming the heart, and changing its inclination, by a discovery of God's holy beauty: in a legal humiliation, the conscience is convinced; as the consciences of all will be most perfectly at the day of judgment; but because there is no spiritual understanding, the will is not bowed, nor the inclination altered: this is done only in evangelical humiliation. In legal humiliation, men are brought to despair of helping themselves; in evangelical, they are brought voluntarily to deny and renounce themselves: in the former, they are subdued and forced to the ground; in the latter, they are brought sweetly to yield, and freely and with delight to prostrate themselves at the feet of God.

Legal humiliation has in it no spiritual good, nothing of the nature of true virtue; whereas evangelical humiliation is that wherein the excellent beauty of Christian grace does very much consist. Legal humiliation is useful, as a means in order to evangelical; as a common knowledge of the things of religion is a means requisite in order to spiritual knowledge. Men may be legally humbled and have no humility: as the wicked at the day of judgment will be thoroughly convinced that they have no righteousness, but are altogether sinful, and exceedingly guilty, and justly exposed to eternal damnation, and be fully sensible of their own helplessness, without the least mortification of the pride of their hearts: but the essence of evangelical humiliation consists in such humility, as becomes a creature, in itself exceeding sinful, under a dispensation of grace; consisting in a mean esteem of himself, as in himself nothing, and altogether contemptible and odious; attended with a mortification of a disposition to exalt himself, and a free renunciation of his own glory.

This is a great and most essential thing in true religion. The whole frame of the gospel, and every thing appertaining to the new covenant, and all God's dispensations towards fallen man, are calculated to bring to pass this effect in the hearts of men. They that are destitute of this, have no true religion, whatever profession they may make, and how high soever their religious affections may be: Hab. ii. 4, "Behold, his soul which is lifted up, is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith;" i. e., he shall live by his faith on God's righteousness and grace, and not his own goodness and excellency. God has abundantly manifested in his word, that this is what he has a peculiar respect to in his saints, and that nothing is acceptable to him without it. Psalm xxxiv. 18, "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit." Psalm li. 17, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." Psalm cxxxviii. 6, "Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly." Prov. iii. 34, "He giveth grace unto the lowly." Isa. lvii. 15, "Thus saith the high and lofty One who inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy, I dwell in the high and holy place; with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Isa. lxvi. 1, 2, "Thus saith the Lord, the heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." Micah vi. 8, "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord thy God require of thee; but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Matt. v. 3, "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of God." Matt. xviii. 3, 4, "Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever

therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." Mark x. 15, "Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein." The centurion, that we have an account of, Luke vii., acknowledged that he was not worthy that Christ should enter under his roof, and that he was not worthy to come to him. See the manner of the woman's coming to Christ, that was a sinner, Luke vii. 37, &c.: "And behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head." She did not think the hair of her head, which is the natural crown and glory of a woman (1 Cor. xi. 15), too good to wipe the feet of Christ withal. Jesus most graciously accepted her, and says to her, "thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace." The woman of Canaan submitted to Christ, in his saying, "it is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to dogs," and did as it were own that she was worthy to be called a dog; whereupon Christ says unto her, "O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee, even as thou wilt," Matt. xv. 26, 27, 28. The prodigal son said, "I will arise and go to my father, and I will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants," Luke xv. 18, &c. See also Luke xviii. 9, &c.: "And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others, &c. The publican, standing afar off, would not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself, shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted." Matt. xxviii. 9, "And they came, and held him by the feet, and worshipped him." Col. iii. 12, "Put ye on, as the elect of God, humbleness of mind." Ezek. xx. 41, 42, "I will accept you with your sweet savor, when I bring you out from the people, &c. And there shall ye remember your ways, and all your doings, wherein ye have been defiled, and ye shall loathe yourselves in your own sight, for all your evils that ye have committed." Chap. xxxvi. 26, 27, 31, "A new heart also will I give unto you—and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, &c. Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities, and for your abominations." Chap. xvi. 63, "That thou mayest remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord." Job xlii. 6, "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

As we would therefore make the holy Scriptures our rule in judging of the nature of true religion, and judging of our own religious qualifications and state; it concerns us greatly to look at this humiliation, as one of the most essential things pertaining to true Christianity.* This is the principal part of the great Christian duty of self-denial. That duty consists in two things, viz., *first*, in a man's denying his worldly inclinations, and in forsaking and renouncing all worldly objects and enjoyments; and, *secondly*, in denying his natural self-ex-

* Calvin, in his Institutions, Book II. chap. 2. § 11, says, "I was always exceedingly pleased with that saying of Chrysostom, "The foundation of our philosophy is humility;" and yet more pleased with that of Augustine: "As," says he, "the rhetorician being asked, what was the first thing in the rules of eloquence, he answered, pronunciation; what was the second, pronunciation; what was the third, still he answered, pronunciation. So if you shall ask me concerning the precepts of the Christian religion, I would answer, firstly, secondly, and thirdly, and forever, humility."

altation, and renouncing his own dignity and glory, and in being emptied of himself; so that he does freely and from his very heart, as it were renounce himself, and annihilate himself. Thus the Christian doth in evangelical humiliation. And this latter is the greatest and most difficult part of self-denial: although they always go together, and one never truly is, where the other is not; yet natural men can come much nearer to the former than the latter. Many Anchorites and Recluses have abandoned (though without any true mortification) the wealth, and pleasures, and common enjoyments of the world, who were far from renouncing their own dignity and righteousness; they never denied themselves for Christ, but only sold one lust to feed another, sold a beastly lust to pamper a devilish one; and so were never the better, but their latter end was worse than their beginning; they turned out one black devil, to let in seven white ones, that were worse than the first, though of a fairer countenance. It is inexpressible, and almost inconceivable, how strong a self-righteous, self exalting disposition is naturally in man; and what he will not do and suffer to feed and gratify it: and what lengths have been gone in a seeming self-denial in other respects, by Essenes and Pharisees among the Jews, and by Papists, many sects of heretics, and enthusiasts, among professing Christians; and by many Mahometans; and by Pythagorean philosophers, and others among the Heathen; and all to do sacrifice to this Moloch of spiritual pride or self-righteousness; and that they may have something wherein to exalt themselves before God, and above their fellow creatures.

That humiliation which has been spoken of, is what all the most glorious hypocrites, who make the most splendid show of mortification to the world, and high religious affection, do grossly fail in. Were it not that this is so much insisted on in Scripture, as a most essential thing in true grace, one would be tempted to think that many of the heathen philosophers were truly gracious, in whom was so bright an appearance of many virtues, and also great illuminations, and inward fervors and elevations of mind, as though they were truly the subjects of divine illapses and heavenly communications.* It is true, that many hypocrites make great pretences to humility, as well as other graces; and very often there is nothing whatsoever which they make a higher profession of. They endeavor to make a great show of humility in speech and behavior; but they commonly make bungling work of it, though glorious work in their own eyes. They cannot find out what a humble speech and behavior is, or how to speak and act so that there may indeed be a savor of Christian humility in what they say and do: that sweet humble air and mien is beyond their art, being not led by the Spirit, or naturally guided to a behavior becoming holy humility, by

* "Albeit the Pythagoreans were thus famous for Judaic mysterious wisdom, and many moral, as well as natural accomplishments, yet were they not exempted from boasting and pride; which was indeed a vice most epidemic, and as it were congenial, among all the philosophers; but in a more particular manner, among the Pythagoreans. So Hornius Hist. Philosoph. L. III. chap. xi. The manners of the Pythagoreans were not free from boasting. They were all such as abounded in the sense and commendation of their own excellencies, and boasting even almost to the degree of immodesty and impudence, as great Heinsius, ad Horat. has rightly observed. Thus indeed does proud nature delight to walk in the sparks of its own fire. And although many of these old philosophers could, by the strength of their own lights and heats, together with some common elevations and raisures of spirit (peradventure from a more than ordinary, though not special and saving assistance of the Spirit), abandon many grosser vices; yet they were all deeply immersed in that miserable cursed abyss of spiritual pride: so that all their natural, and moral, and philosophic attainments, did feed, nourish, strengthen and render most inveterate, this hell-bred pest of their hearts. Yea, those of them that seemed most modest, as the Academics, who professed they knew nothing, and the Cynics, who greatly decried, both in words and habits, the pride of others, yet even they abounded in the most notorious and visible pride. So connatural and morally essential to corrupt nature, is this envenomed root, fountain, and plague of spiritual pride; especially where there is any natural, moral, or philosophic excellence to feed the same. Whence, Austin rightly judged all these philosophic virtues to be but splendid sins. *Gale's Court of the Gentiles*, Part II. B. II. chap. x. § 17.

the vigor of a lowly spirit within them. And therefore they have no other way, many of them, but only to be much in declaring that they be humble, and telling how they were humbled to the dust at such and such times, and abounding in very bad expressions which they use about themselves; such as, "I am the least of all saints, I am a poor vile creature, I am not worthy of the least mercy, or that God should look upon me! Oh, I have a dreadful wicked heart! My heart is worse than the devil! Oh, this cursed heart of mine," &c. Such expressions are very often used, not with a heart that is broken, not with spiritual mourning, not with the tears of her that washed Jesus's feet, not as "remembering and being confounded, and never opening their mouth more because of their shame, when God is pacified," as the expression is, Ezek. xvi. 63, but with a light air, with smiles in the countenance, or with a pharisaical affectation: and we must believe that they are thus humble, and see themselves so vile, upon the credit of their say so; for there is nothing appears in them of any savor of humility, in the manner of their deportment and deeds that they do. There are many that are full of expressions of their own vileness, who yet expect to be looked upon as eminent and bright saints by others, as their due; and it is dangerous for any, so much as to hint the contrary, or to carry it towards them any otherwise, than as if we looked upon them as some of the chief of Christians. There are many that are much in crying out of their wicked hearts, and their great short comings, and unprofitableness, and speaking as though they looked on themselves as the meanest of the saints; who yet, if a minister should seriously tell them the same things in private, and should signify, that he feared they were very low and weak Christians, and thought they had reason solemnly to consider of their great barrenness and unprofitableness, and falling so much short of many others, it would be more than they could digest; they would think themselves highly injured; and there would be a danger of a rooted prejudice in them against such a minister.

There are some that are abundant in talking against legal doctrines, legal preaching, and a legal spirit, who do but little understand the thing they talk against. A legal spirit is a more subtle thing than they imagine; it is too subtle for them. It lurks, and operates, and prevails in their hearts, and they are most notoriously guilty of it, at the same time, when they are inveighing against it. So far as a man is not emptied of himself, and of his own righteousness and goodness, in whatever form or shape, so far he is of a legal spirit. A spirit of pride of man's own righteousness, morality, holiness, affection, experience, faith, humiliation, or any goodness whatsoever, is a legal spirit. It was no pride in Adam before the fall, to be of a legal spirit; because of his circumstances, he might seek acceptance by his own righteousness. But a legal spirit in a fallen, sinful creature, can be nothing else but spiritual pride; and reciprocally, a spiritually proud spirit is a legal spirit. There is no man living that is lifted up with a conceit of his own experiences and discoveries, and upon the account of them glisters in his own eyes, but what trusts in his experiences, and makes a righteousness of them; however he may use humble terms, and speak of his experiences as of the great things God has done for him, and it may be calls upon others to glorify God for them; yet he that is proud of his experiences, arrogates something to himself, as though his experiences were some dignity of his. And if he looks on them as his own dignity, he necessarily thinks that God looks on them so too: for he necessarily thinks his own opinion of them to be true; and consequently judges that God looks on them as he does; and so unavoidably imagines that God looks on his experiences as a dignity in him, as he looks on them himself; and that he glisters as much in God's eyes,

as he does in his own. And thus he trusts in what is inherent in him, to make him shine in God's sight, and recommend him to God: and with this encouragement he goes before God in prayer; and this makes him expect much from God; and this makes him think that Christ loves him, and that he is willing to clothe him with his righteousness; because he supposes that he is taken with his experiences and graces. And this is a high degree of living on his own righteousness; and such persons are in the high road to hell. Poor deluded wretches, who think they look so glistering in God's eyes, when they are a smoke in his nose, and are many of them more odious to him, than the most impure beast in Sodom, that makes no pretence to religion! To do as these do, is to live upon experiences, according to the true notion of it; and not to do as those, who only make use of spiritual experiences, as evidences of a state of grace, and in that way receive hope and comfort from them.

There is a sort of men, who indeed abundantly cry down works, and cry up faith in opposition to works, and set up themselves very much as evangelical persons, in opposition to those that are of a legal spirit, and make a fair show of advancing Christ and the gospel, and the way of free grace; who are indeed some of the greatest enemies to the gospel way of free grace, and the most dangerous opposers of pure humble Christianity.

There is a pretended great humiliation, and being dead to the law, and emptied of self, which is one of the biggest and most elated things in the world. Some there are, who have made great profession of experience of a thorough work of the law on their hearts, and of being brought fully off from works; whose conversation has savored most of a self-righteous spirit of any that ever I had opportunity to observe. And some who think themselves quite emptied of themselves, and are confident that they are abased in the dust, are full as they can hold with the glory of their own humility, and lifted up to heaven with a high opinion of their own abasement. Their humility is a swelling, self-conceited, confident, showy, noisy, assuming humility. It seems to be the nature of spiritual pride to make men conceited and ostentatious of their humility. This appears in that first born of pride among the children of men, that would be called his holiness, even the man of sin, that exalts himself above all that is called God or is worshipped; he styles himself Servant of servants; and to make a show of humility, washes the feet of a number of poor men at his inauguration.

For persons to be truly emptied of themselves, and to be poor in spirit, and broken in heart, is quite another thing, and has other effects, than many imagine. It is astonishing how greatly many are deceived about themselves as to this matter, imagining themselves most humble, when they are most proud, and their behavior is really the most haughty. The deceitfulness of the heart of man appears in no one thing so much as this of spiritual pride and self-righteousness. The subtilty of Satan appears in its height, in his managing of persons with respect to this sin. And perhaps one reason may be, that here he has most experience; he knows the way of its coming in; he is acquainted with the secret springs of it: it was his own sin.—Experience gives vast advantage in leading souls, either in good or evil.

But though spiritual pride be so subtle and secret an iniquity, and commonly appears under a pretext of great humility; yet there are two things by which it may (perhaps universally and surely) be discovered and distinguished.

The first thing is this; he that is under the prevalence of this distemper, is apt to think highly of his attainments in religion, as comparing himself with others It is natural for him to fall into that thought of himself, that he is an

eminent saint, that he is very high amongst the saints, and has distinguishingly good and great experiences. That is the secret language of his heart: Luke xviii. 11, "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men." And Isa. lxv. 5, "I am holier than thou." Hence such are apt to put themselves forward among God's people, and as it were to take a high seat among them, as if there was no doubt of it but it belonged to them. They, as it were, naturally do that which Christ condemns, Luke xiv. 7, &c., take the highest room. This they do, by being forward to take upon them the place and business of the chief; to guide, teach, direct, and manage; "they are confident that they are guides to the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, instructors of the foolish, teachers of babes," Rom. ii. 19, 20. It is natural for them to take it for granted, that it belongs to them to do the part of dictators and masters in matters of religion; and so they implicitly affect to be called of men Rabbi, which is by interpretation Master, as the Pharisees did, Matt. xxiii. 6, 7, i. e., they are yet apt to expect that others should regard them, and yield to them, as masters in matters of religion.*

But he whose heart is under the power of Christian humility, is of a contrary disposition. If the Scriptures are at all to be relied on, such a one is apt to think his attainments in religion to be comparatively mean, and to esteem himself low among the saints, and one of the least of saints. Humility, or true lowliness of mind, disposes persons to think others better than themselves: Phil. ii. 3, "In lowliness of mind, let each esteem others better than themselves." Hence they are apt to think the lowest room belongs to them, and their inward disposition naturally leads them to obey that precept of our Saviour, Luke xiv. 10. It is not natural to them to take it upon them to do the part of teachers; but on the contrary, they are disposed to think that they are not the persons, that others are fitter for it than they; as it was with Moses and Jeremiah (Exod. iii. 11, Jer. i. 6), though they were such eminent saints, and of great knowledge. It is not natural to them to think that it belongs to them to teach, but to be taught; they are much more eager to hear, and to receive instruction from others, than to dictate to others: Jam. i. 19, "Be ye swift to hear, slow to speak." And when they do speak, it is not natural to them to speak with a bold, masterly air; but humility disposes them rather to speak, trembling. Hos. xiii. 1, "When Ephraim spake trembling, he exalted himself in Israel; but when he offended in Baal, he died." They are not apt to assume authority, and to take upon them to be chief managers and masters; but rather to be subject to others: Jam. iii. 1, 2, "Be not many masters." 1 Pet. v. 5, "All of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility." Eph. v. 21, "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God."

There are some persons' experiences that naturally work that way, to make them think highly of them; and they do often themselves speak of their experiences as very great and extraordinary; they freely speak of the great things they have met with. This may be spoken and meant in a good sense. In one sense, every degree of saving mercy is a great thing: it is indeed a thing great, yea, infinitely great, for God to bestow the least crumb of children's bread on such dogs as we are in ourselves; and the more humble a person is that hopes that God has bestowed such mercy on him, the more apt will he be to call it a great thing that he has met with in this sense. But if by great things which

* "There be two things wherein it appears that a man has only common gifts, and no inward principle: 1. These gifts ever puff up, and make a man something in his own eyes, as the Corinthian knowledge did, and many a private man thinks himself fit to be a minister." *Shepard's Parable*, Part I. p. 181 182.

they have experienced, they mean comparatively great spiritual experiences, or great compared with others' experiences, or beyond what is ordinary, which is evidently oftentimes the case; then for a person to say, I have met with great things, is the very same thing as to say, I am an eminent saint, and have more grace than ordinary: for to have great experiences, if the experiences be true and worth the telling of, is the same thing as to have great grace: there is no true experience, but the exercise of grace; and exactly according to the degree of true experience, is the degree of grace and holiness. The persons that talk thus about their experiences, when they give an account of them, expect that others should admire them. Indeed they do not call it boasting to talk after this manner about their experiences, nor do they look upon it as any sign of pride; because they say, "they know that it was not they that did it, it was free grace, they are things that God has done for them, they would acknowledge the great mercy God has shown them, and not make light of it." But so it was with the Pharisee that Christ tells us of, Luke xviii. He in words gave God the glory of making him to differ from other men; God, I thank thee, says he, that I am not as other men.* Their verbally ascribing it to the grace of God, that they are holier than other saints, does not hinder their forwardness to think so highly of their holiness, being a sure evidence of the pride and vanity of their minds. If they were under the influence of a humble spirit, their attainments in religion would not be so apt to shine in their own eyes, nor would they be so much in admiring their own beauty. The Christians that are really the most eminent saints, and therefore have the most excellent experiences, and are the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, humble themselves as a little child, Matt. viii. 4; because they look on themselves as but little children in grace, and their attainments to be but the attainments of babes in Christ, and are astonished at, and ashamed of the low degrees of their love, and their thankfulness, and their little knowledge of God. Moses, when he had been conversing with God in the mount, and his face shone so bright in the eyes of others as to dazzle their eyes, wist not that his face shone. There are some persons that go by the name of high professors, and some will own themselves to be high professors; but eminently humble saints, that will shine brightest in heaven, are not at all apt to profess high. I do not believe there is an eminent saint in the world that is a high professor. Such will be much more likely to profess themselves to be least of all saints, and to think that every saint's attainments and experiences are higher than his.†

Such is the nature of grace, and of true spiritual light, that they naturally dispose the saints in the present state, to look upon their grace and goodness little, and their deformity great. And they that have the most grace and spir-

* Calvin, in his Institutions, B. III. chap. xii. § 7, speaking of this Pharisee, observes, "That in his outward confession, he acknowledges that the righteousness that he has, is the gift of God: but (says he) because he trusts that he is righteous, he goes away out of the presence of God, unacceptable and odious."

† Luther, as his words are cited by Rutherford, in his Display of the Spiritual Antichrist, p. 143, 144, says thus: "So is the life of a Christian, that he that has begun, seems to himself to have nothing; but strives and presses forward, that he may apprehend: whence Paul says, I count not myself to have apprehended. For indeed nothing is more pernicious to a believer, than that presumption, that he has already apprehended, and has no further need of seeking. Hence also many fall back, and pine away in spiritual security and slothfulness. So Bernard says, 'To stand still in God's way, is to go back.' Wherefore this remains to him that has begun to be a Christian, to think that he is not yet a Christian, but to seek that he may be a Christian, that he may glory with Paul, 'I am not, but I desire to be;' a Christian not yet finished, but only in his beginnings. Therefore he is not a Christian, that is a Christian, that is, he that thinks himself a finished Christian, and is not sensible how he falls short. We reach after heaven, but we are not in heaven. Wo to him that is wholly renewed, that is, that thinks himself to be so. That man, without doubt, has never so much as begun to be renewed, nor did he ever taste what it is to be a Christian."

itual light, of any in this world, have most of this disposition. As will appear most clear and evident to any one that soberly and thoroughly weighs the nature and reason of things, and considers the things following.

That grace and holiness is worthy to be called little, that is, little in comparison of what it ought to be. And so it seems to one that is truly gracious: for such a one has his eye upon the rule of his duty; a conformity to that is what he aims at; it is what his soul struggles and reaches after; and it is by that that he estimates and judges of what he does, and what he has. To a gracious soul, and especially to one eminently gracious, that holiness appears little, which is little of what it should be; little of what he sees infinite reason for, and obligation to. If his holiness appears to him to be at a vast distance from this, it naturally appears despicable in his eyes, and not worthy to be mentioned as any beauty or amiableness in him. For the like reason as a hungry man naturally accounts that which is set before him, but a little food, a small matter, not worth mentioning, that is nothing in comparison of his appetite. Or as the child of a great prince, that is jealous for the honor of his father, and beholds the respect which men show him, naturally looks on that honor and respect very little, and not worthy to be regarded, which is nothing in comparison of that which the dignity of his father requires.

But that is the nature of true grace and spiritual light, that it opens to a person's view the infinite reason there is that he should be holy in a high degree. And the more grace he has, the more this is opened to view, the greater sense he has of the infinite excellency and glory of the divine Being, and of the infinite dignity of the person of Christ, and the boundless length and breadth, and depth and height, of the love of Christ to sinners. And as grace increases, the field opens more and more to a distant view, until the soul is swallowed up with the vastness of the object, and the person is astonished to think how much it becomes him to love this God, and this glorious Redeemer, that has so loved man, and how little he does love. And so the more he apprehends, the more the smallness of his grace and love appears strange and wonderful: and therefore is more ready to think that others are beyond him. For wondering at the littleness of his own grace, he can scarcely believe that so strange a thing happens to other saints: it is amazing to him, that one that is really a child of God, and that has actually received the saving benefits of that unspeakable love of Christ, should love no more: and he is apt to look upon it as a thing peculiar to himself, a strange and exempt instance; for he sees only the outside of other Christians, but he sees his own inside.

Here the reader may possibly object, that love to God is really increased in proportion as the knowledge of God is increased; and therefore how should an increase of knowledge in a saint make his love appear less, in comparison of what is known? To which I answer, that although grace and the love of God in the saints, be answerable to the degree of knowledge or sight of God; yet it is not in proportion to the object seen and known. The soul of a saint, by having something of God opened to sight, is convinced of much more than is seen. There is something that is seen, that is wonderful; and that sight brings with it a strong conviction of something vastly beyond, that is not immediately seen. So that the soul, at the same time, is astonished at its ignorance, and that it knows so little, as well as that it loves so little. And as the soul, in a spiritual view, is convinced of infinitely more in the object, yet beyond sight; so it is convinced of the capacity of the soul, of knowing vastly more, if the clouds and darkness were but removed. Which causes the soul, in the enjoyment of a spiritual view, to complain greatly of spiritual ignorance, and

want of love, and to long and reach after more knowledge and more love.

Grace and the love of God in the most eminent saints in this world, is truly very little in comparison of what it ought to be. Because the highest love that ever any attain to in this life, is poor, cold, exceedingly low, and not worthy to be named in comparison of what our obligations appear to be, from the joint consideration of these two things, viz.: 1. The reason God has given us to love him, in the manifestations he has made of his infinite glory, in his word, and in his works; and particularly in the gospel of his Son, and what he has done for sinful man by him. And, 2. The capacity there is in the soul of man, by those intellectual faculties which God has given it, of seeing and understanding these reasons, which God has given us to love him. How small indeed is the love of the most eminent saint on earth, in comparison of what these things, jointly considered, do require! And this grace tends to convince men of this, and especially eminent grace; for grace is of the nature of light, and brings truth to view And therefore he that has much grace, apprehends much more than others that great height to which his love ought to ascend; and he sees better than others, how little a way he has risen towards that height. And therefore estimating his love by the whole height of his duty, hence it appears astonishingly little and low in his eyes.

And the eminent saint, having such a conviction of the high degree in which he ought to love God, this shows him, not only the littleness of his grace, but the greatness of his remaining corruption. In order to judge how much corruption or sin we have remaining in us, we must take our measure from that height to which the rule of our duty extends: the whole of the distance we are at from that height, is sin: for failing of duty is sin; otherwise our duty is not our duty, and by how much the more we fall short of our duty, so much the more sin have we. Sin is no other than disagreeableness, in a moral agent, to the law or rule of his duty. And therefore the degree of sin is to be judged of by the rule: so much disagreeableness to the rule, so much sin, whether it be in defect or excess. Therefore if men, in their love to God, do not come up half way to that height which duty requires, then they have more corruption in their hearts than grace; because there is more goodness wanting, than is there: and all that is wanting is sin: it is an abominable defect; and appears so to the saints; especially those that are eminent; it appears exceeding abominable to them, that Christ should be loved so little, and thanked so little for his dying love: it is in their eyes hateful ingratitude.

And then the increase of grace has a tendency another way, to cause the saints to think their deformity vastly more than their goodness: it not only tends to convince them that their corruption is much greater than their goodness, which is indeed the case; but it also tends to cause the deformity that there is in the least sin, or the least degree of corruption, to appear so great as vastly to outweigh all the beauty there is in their greatest holiness; for this also is indeed the case. For the least sin against an infinite God, has an infinite hatefulness or deformity in it; but the highest degree of holiness in a creature, has not an infinite loveliness in it: and therefore the loveliness of it is as nothing, in comparison of the deformity of the least sin. That every sin has infinite deformity and hatefulness in it it, is most demonstrably evident; because what the evil, or iniquity, or hatefulness of sin consists in, is the violating of an obligation, or the being or doing contrary to what we should be or do, or are obliged to. And therefore by how much the greater the obligation is that is violated, so much the greater is the iniquity and hatefulness of the violation. But certainly our obligation to

love and honor any being is in some proportion to his loveliness and honorableness, or to his worthiness to be loved and honored by us; which is the same thing. We are surely under greater obligation to love a more lovely being, than a less lovely; and if a Being be infinitely lovely or worthy to be loved by us, then our obligations to love him are infinitely great; and therefore, whatever is contrary to this love, has in it infinite iniquity, deformity, and unworthiness. But on the other hand, with respect to our holiness or love to God, there is not an infinite worthiness in that. The sin of the creature against God, is ill deserving and hateful in proportion to the distance there is between God and the creature: the greatness of the object, and the meanness and inferiority of the subject, aggravates it. But it is the reverse with regard to the worthiness of the respect of the creature to God; it is worthless, and not worthy, in proportion to the meanness of the subject. So much the greater the distance between God and the creature, so much the less is the creature's respect worthy of God's notice or regard. The great degree of superiority increases the obligation on the inferior to regard the superior; and so makes the want of regard more hateful. But the great degree of inferiority diminishes the worth of the regard of the inferior; because the more he is inferior, the less he is worthy of notice; the less he is, the less is what he can offer worth; for he can offer no more than himself, in offering his best respect; and therefore as he is little, and little worth, so is his respect little worth. And the more a person has of true grace and spiritual light, the more will it appear thus to him; the more will he appear to himself infinitely deformed by reason of sin, and the less will the goodness that is in his grace, or good experience, appear in proportion to it. For indeed it is nothing to it; it is less than a drop to the ocean; for finite bears no proportion at all to that which is infinite. But the more a person has of spiritual light, the more do things appear to him, in this respect, as they are indeed.—Hence it most demonstrably appears, that true grace is of that nature, that the more a person has of it, with remaining corruption, the less does his goodness and holiness appear, in proportion to his deformity; and not only to his past deformity, but to his present deformity, in the sin that now appears in his heart, and the abominable defects of his highest and best affections, and brightest experiences.

The nature of many high and religious affections, and great discoveries (as they are called) in many persons that I have been acquainted with, is to hide and cover over the corruption of their hearts, and to make it seem to them as if all their sin was gone, and to leave them without complaints of any hateful evil left in them (though it may be they cry out much of their past unworthiness); a sure and certain evidence that their discoveries (as they call them) are darkness and not light. It is darkness that hides men's pollution and deformity; but light let into the heart discovers it, searches it out in its secret corners, and makes it plainly to appear; especially that penetrating, all searching light of God's holiness and glory. It is true, that saving discoveries may for the present hide corruption in one sense; they restrain the positive exercises of it, such as malice, envy, covetousness, lasciviousness, murmuring, &c., but they bring corruption to light, in that which is privative, viz., that there is no more love, no more humility, no more thankfulness. Which defects appear most hateful in the eyes of those who have the most eminent exercises of grace; and are very burdensome, and cause the saints to cry out of their leanness, and odious pride and ingratitude. And whatever positive exercises of corruption at any time arise, and mingle themselves with eminent actings of grace, grace will exceedingly magnify the view of them, and render their appearance far more heinous and horrible

The more eminent saints are, and the more they have of the light of heaven in their souls, the more do they appear to themselves, as the most eminent saints in this world do to the saints and angels in heaven. How can we rationally suppose the most eminent saints on earth appear to them, if beheld any otherwise, than covered over with the righteousness of Christ, and their deformities swallowed up and hid in the coruscation of the beams of his abundant glory and love? How can we suppose our most ardent love and praises appear to them, that do behold the beauty and glory of God without a vail? How does our highest thankfulness for the dying love of Christ appear to them, who see Christ as he is, who know as they are known, and see the glory of the person of him that died, and the wonders of his dying love, without any cloud of darkness? And how do they look on the deepest reverence and humility, with which worms of the dust on earth approach that infinite Majesty which they behold? Do they appear great to them, or so much as worthy of the name of reverence and humility, in those that they see to be at such an infinite distance from that great and holy God, in whose glorious presence they are? The reason why the highest attainments of the saints on earth appear so mean to them, is because they dwell in the light of God's glory, and see God as he is. And it is in this respect with the saints on earth, as it is with the saints in heaven, in proportion as they are more eminent in grace.

I would not be understood, that the saints on earth have in all respects the worst opinion of themselves, when they have most of the exercises of grace. In many respects it is otherwise. With respect to the positive exercises of corruption, they may appear to themselves freest and best when grace is most in exercise, and worst when the actings of grace are lowest. And when they compare themselves with themselves at different times, they may know, when grace is in lively exercise, that it is better with them than it was before (though before, in the time of it, they did not see so much badness as they see now) and when afterwards they sink again in the frame of their minds, they may know that they sink, and have a new argument of their great remaining corruption, and a rational conviction of a greater vileness than they saw before; and many have more of a sense of guilt, and a kind of legal sense of their sinfulness by far, than when in the lively exercise of grace. But yet it is true, and demonstrable from the forementioned considerations, that the children of God never have so much of a sensible and spiritual conviction of their deformity, and so great, and quick, and abasing a sense of their present vileness and odiousness, as when they are highest in the exercise of true and pure grace; and never are they so much disposed to set themselves low among Christians as then. And thus he that is greatest in the kingdom, or most eminent in the church of Christ, is the same that humbles himself, as the least infant among them; agreeable to that great saying of Christ, Matt. xviii. 4.

A true saint may know that he has some true grace: and the more grace there is, the more easily is it known, as was observed and proved before. But yet it does not follow, that an eminent saint is easily sensible that he is an eminent saint, when compared with others. I will not deny that it is possible, that he that has much grace, and is an eminent saint, may know it. But he will not be apt to know it; it will not be a thing obvious to him: that he is better than others, and has higher experiences and attainments, is not a foremost thought; nor is it that which, from time to time readily offers itself; it is a thing that is not in his way, but lies far out of sight; he must take pains to convince himself of it; there will be need of a great command of reason, and a high degree of strictness and care in arguing, to convince himself. And if he be rationally convinced by

a very strict consideration of his own experiences, compared with the great appearances of low degrees of grace in some other saints, it will hardly seem real to him, that he has more grace than they; and he will be apt to lose the conviction that he has by pains obtained: nor will it seem at all natural to him to act upon that supposition. And this may be laid down as an infallible thing, "that the person who is apt to think that he, as compared with others, is a very eminent saint, much distinguished in Christian experience, in whom this is a first thought, that rises of itself, and naturally offers itself; he is certainly mistaken; he is no eminent saint, but under the great prevailings of a proud and self-righteous spirit." And if this be habitual with the man, and is steadily the prevailing temper of his mind, he is no saint at all; he has not the least degree of any true Christian experience; so surely as the word of God is true.

And that sort of experiences that appears to be of that tendency, and is found from time to time to have that effect, to elevate the subject of them with a great conceit of those experiences, is certainly vain and delusive. Those supposed discoveries that naturally blow up the person with an admiration of the eminency of his discoveries, and fill him with conceit that now he has seen, and knows more than most other Christians, have nothing of the nature of true spiritual light in them. All true spiritual knowledge is of that nature, that the more a person has of it, the more is he sensible of his own ignorance; as is evident by 1 Cor. viii. 2: "He that thinketh he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know." Agur, when he had a great discovery of God, and sense of the wonderful height of his glory, and of his marvellous works, and cries out of his greatness and incomprehensibleness; at the same time, had the deepest sense of his brutish ignorance, and looked upon himself the most ignorant of all the saints. Prov. xxx. 2, 3, 4: "Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy. Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? Who hath gathered the wind in his fists? Who hath bound the waters in a garment? Who hath established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?"

For a man to be highly conceited of his spiritual and divine knowledge, is for him to be wise in his own eyes, if any thing is. And therefore it comes under those prohibitions: Prov. iii. 7, "Be not wise in thine own eyes." Rom. xii. 16, "Be not wise in your own conceits;" and brings men under that wo, Isa. v. 21: "Wo unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight." Those that are thus wise in their own eyes, are some of the least likely to get good of any in the world. Experience shows the truth of that, Prov. xxvi. 12: "Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? There is more hope of a fool than of him."

To this some may object, that the Psalmist, when we must suppose that he was in a holy frame, speaks of his knowledge as eminently great, and far greater than that of other saints: Psal. cxix. 99, 100, "I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts."

To this I answer two things:

(1.) There is no restraint to be laid upon the Spirit of God, as to what he shall reveal to a prophet, for the benefit of his church, who is speaking or writing under immediate inspiration. The Spirit of God may reveal to such a one, and dictate to him, to declare to others secret things, that otherwise would be hard, yea impossible for him to find out. As he may reveal to him mysteries, that otherwise would be above the reach of his reason; or things in a distant place, that

he cannot see; or future events, that it would be impossible for him to know and declare, if they were not extraordinarily revealed to him; so the Spirit of God might reveal to David this distinguishing benefit he had received, by conversing much with God's testimonies; and use him as his instrument to record it for the benefit of others, to excite them to the like duty, and to use the same means to gain knowledge. Nothing can be gathered concerning the natural tendency of the ordinary gracious influences of the Spirit of God, from that, that David declares of his distinguishing knowledge under the extraordinary influences of God's Spirit, immediately dictating to him the divine mind by inspiration, and using David as his instrument to write what he pleased for the benefit of his church; any more than we can reasonably argue, that it is the natural tendency of grace to incline men to curse others, and wish the most dreadful misery to them that can be thought of, because David, under inspiration, often curses others, and prays that such misery may come upon them.

(2.) It is not certain that the knowledge David here speaks of, is spiritual knowledge, wherein holiness does fundamentally consist. But it may be that greater revelation which God made to him of the Messiah, and the things of his future kingdom, and the far more clear and extensive knowledge that he had of the mysteries and doctrines of the gospel, than others; as a reward for his keeping God's testimonies. In this, it is apparent by the book of Psalms, that David far exceeded all that had gone before him.

Secondly, Another thing that is an infallible sign of spiritual pride, is persons being apt to think highly of their humility. False experiences are commonly attended with a counterfeit humility. And it is the very nature of a counterfeit humility, to be highly conceited of itself. False religious affections have generally that tendency, especially when raised to a great height to make persons think that their humility is great, and accordingly to take much notice of their great attainments in this respect, and admire them. But eminently gracious affections (I scruple not to say it) are evermore of a contrary tendency, and have universally a contrary effect in those that have them They indeed make them very sensible what reason there is that they should be deeply humbled, and cause them earnestly to thirst and long after it; but they make their present humility, or that which they have already attained to, to appear small; and their remaining pride great, and exceedingly abominable.

The reason why a proud person should be apt to think his humility great, and why a very humble person should think his humility small, may be easily seen, if it be considered, that it is natural for persons, in judging of the degree of their own humiliation, to take their measure from that which they esteem their proper height, or the dignity wherein they properly stand. That may be great humiliation in one, that is no humiliation at all in another; because the degree of honorableness, or considerableness wherein each does properly stand, is very different. For some great man, to stoop to loose the latchet of the shoes of another great man, his equal, or to wash his feet, would be taken notice of as an act of abasement in him; and he, being sensible of his own dignity, would look upon it so himself. But if a poor slave is seen stooping to unloose the shoes of a great prince, nobody will take any notice of this, as any act of humiliation in him, or token of any great degree of humility: nor would the slave himself, unless he be horribly proud and ridiculously conceited of himself: and if after he had done it, he should, in his talk and behavior, show that he thought his abasement great in it, and had his mind much upon it, as an evidence of his being very humble; would not every body cry out upon him,

'Whom do you think yourself to be, that you should think this that you have done such a deep humiliation?" This would make it plain to a demonstration, that this slave was swollen with a high degree of pride and vanity of mind, as much as if he declared in plain terms, "I think myself to be some great one." And the matter is no less plain and certain, when worthless, vile, and loathsome worms of the dust, are apt to put such a construction on their acts of abasement before God; and to think it a token of great humility in them that they, under their affections, can find themselves so willing to acknowledge themselves to be so mean and unworthy, and to behave themselves as those that are so inferior. The very reason why such outward acts, and such inward exercises, look like great abasement in such a one, is because he has a high conceit of himself. Whereas if he thought of himself more justly, these things would appear nothing to him, and his humility in them worthy of no regard; but would rather be astonished at his pride, that one so infinitely despicable and vile is brought no lower before God.—When he says in his heart, "This is a great act of humiliation; it is certainly a sign of great humility in me, that I should feel thus and do so;" his meaning is, "This is great humility for me, for such a one as I, that am so considerable and worthy." He considers how low he is now brought, and compares this with the height of dignity on which he in his heart thinks he properly stands, and the distance appears very great, and he calls it all mere humility, and as such admires it. Whereas, in him that is truly humble, and really sees his own vileness, and loathsomeness before God, the distance appears the other way. When he is brought lowest of all, it does not appear to him, that he is brought below his proper station, but that he is not come to it; he appears to himself yet vastly above it, he longs to get lower, that he may come to it, but appears at a great distance from it. And this distance he calls pride. And therefore his pride appears great to him, and not his humility. For although he is brought much lower than he used to be, yet it does not appear to him worthy of the name of humiliation, for him that is so infinitely mean and detestable, to come down to a place, which, though it be lower than what he used to assume, is yet vastly higher than what is proper for him. As men would hardly count it worthy of the name of humility, in a contemptible slave, that formerly affected to be a prince, to have his spirit so far brought down, as to take the place of a nobleman; when this is still so far above his proper station.

All men in the world, in judging of the degree of their own and others' humility, as appearing in any act of theirs, consider two things, viz., the real degree of dignity they stand in; and the degree of abasement, and the relation it bears to that real dignity. Thus the complying with the same low place, or low act, may be an evidence of great humility in one, that evidences but little or no humility in another. But truly humble Christians have so mean an opinion of their own real dignity, that all their self-abasement, when considered with relation to that, and compared to that, appears very small to them. It does not seem to them to be any great humility, or any abasement to be made much of, for such poor, vile, abject creatures as they, to lie at the foot of God.

The degree of humility is to be judged of by the degree of abasement, and the degree of the cause for abasement: but he that is truly and eminently humble, never thinks his humility great, considering the cause. The cause why he should be abased appears so great, and the abasement of the frame of his heart so greatly short of it, that he takes much more notice of his pride than his humility.

Every one that has been conversant with souls under convictions of sin,

knows that those who are greatly convinced of sin, are not apt to think themselves greatly convinced. And the reason is this: men judge of the degree of their own convictions of sin by two things jointly considered, viz., the degree of sense which they have of guilt and pollution, and the degree of cause they have for such a sense, in the degree of their real sinfulness. It is really no argument of any great conviction of sin, for some men to think themselves to be very sinful, beyond most others in the world; because they are so indeed, very plainly and notoriously. And therefore a far less conviction of sin may incline such a one to think so than another; he must be very blind indeed not to be sensible of it. But he that is truly under great convictions of sin, naturally thinks this to be his case. It appears to him, that the cause he has to be sensible of guilt and pollution, is greater than others have; and therefore he ascribes his sensibleness of this to the greatness of his sin, and not to the greatness of his sensibility. It is natural for one under great convictions, to think himself one of the greatest of sinners in reality, and also that it is so very plainly and evidently; for the greater his convictions are, the more plain and evident it seems to be to him. And therefore it necessarily seems to him so plain and so easy to him to see it, that it may be seen without much conviction. That man is under great convictions, whose conviction is great in proportion to his sin. But no man that is truly under great convictions, thinks his conviction great in proportion to his sin. For if he does, it is a certain sign that he inwardly thinks his sins small. And if that be the case, that is a certain evidence that his conviction is small. And this, by the way, is the main reason that persons, when under a work of humiliation, are not sensible of it in the time of it.

And as it is with conviction of sin, just so it is, by parity of reason, with respect to persons' conviction or sensibleness of their own meanness and vileness, their own blindness, their own impotence, and all that low sense that a Christian has of himself, in the exercise of evangelical humiliation. So that in a high degree of this, the saints are never disposed to think their sensibleness of their own meanness, filthliness, impotence, &c., to be great; because it never appears great to them considering the cause.

An eminent saint is not apt to think himself eminent in any thing; all his graces and experiences are ready to appear to him to be comparatively small; but especially his humility. There is nothing that appertains to Christian experience, and true piety, that is so much out of his sight as his humility. He is a thousand times more quicksighted to discern his pride than his humility: that he easily discerns, and is apt to take much notice of, but hardly discerns his humility. On the contrary, the deluded hypocrite, that is under the power of spiritual pride, is so blind to nothing as his pride; and so quicksighted to nothing, as the shows of humility that are in him.

The humble Christian is more apt to find fault with his own pride than with other men's. He is apt to put the best construction on others' words and behavior, and to think that none are so proud as himself. But the proud hypocrite is quick to discern the mote in his brother's eye, in this respect; while he sees nothing of the beam in his own. He is very often much in crying out of others' pride, finding fault with others' apparel, and way of living; and is affected ten times as much with his neighbor's ring or ribband, as with all the filthiness of his own heart.

From the disposition there is in hypocrites to think highly of their humility, it comes to pass that counterfeit humility is forward to put itself forth to view. Those that have it, are apt to be much in speaking of their humiliations, and to set them forth in high terms, and to make a great outward show of humility, in

affected looks, gestures, or manner of speech, or meanness of apparel, or some affected singularity. So it was of old with the false prophets, Zech. xiii. 4; so it was with the hypocritical Jews, Isa. lvii. 5, and so Christ tells us it was with the Pharisees, Matt. vi. 16. But it is contrariwise with true humility; they that have it, are not apt to display their eloquence in setting it forth, or to speak of the degree of their abasement in strong terms.* It does not affect to show itself in any singular outward meanness of apparel, or way of living; agreeable to what is implied in Matt. vi. 17, "But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head and wash thy face. Col. ii. 23. Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will worship and humility, and neglecting of the body." Nor is true humility a noisy thing; it is not loud and boisterous. The Scripture represents it as of a contrary nature. Ahab, when he had a visible humility, a resemblance of true humility, went softly, 1 Kings xxi. 27. A penitent, in the exercise of true humiliation, is represented as still and silent, Lam. iii. 28: "He sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him." And silence is mentioned as what attends humility, Prov. xxx. 32: "If thou hast done foolishly in lifting up thyself, or if thou hast thought evil, lay thine hand upon thy mouth."

Thus I have particularly and largely shown the nature of that true humility that attends holy affections, as it appears in its tendency to cause persons to think meanly of their attainments in religion, as compared with the attainments of others, and particularly of their attainments in humility: and have shown the contrary tendency of spiritual pride, to dispose persons to think their attainments in these respects to be great. I have insisted the longer on this, because I look upon it as a matter of great importance, as it affords a certain distinction between true and counterfeit humility; and also as this disposition of hypocrites to look on themselves better than others, is what God has declared to be very hateful to him, "a smoke in his nose, and a fire that burneth all the day," Isa. lxv. 5. It is mentioned as an instance of the pride of the inhabitants of that holy city (as it was called) Jerusalem, that they esteemed themselves far better than the people of Sodom, and so looked upon them worthy to be overlooked and disregarded by them: Ezek. xvi. 56, "For thy sister Sodom was not mentioned by thy mouth in the day of thy pride."

Let not the reader lightly pass over these things in application to himself. If you once have taken it in, that it is a bad sign for a person to be apt to think himself a better saint than others, there will arise a blinding prejudice in your own favor; and there will probably be need of a great strictness of self-examination, in order to determine whether it be so with you. If on the proposal of the question, you answer, "No, it seems to me, none are so bad as I," do not let the matter pass off so; but examine again, whether or no you do not think yourself better than others on this very account, because you imagine you think so meanly of yourself. Have not you a high opinion of this humility? And if you answer again, "No; I have not a high opinion of my humility; it seems to me I am as proud as the devil;" yet examine again, whether self-conceit do not rise up under this cover; whether on this very account, that you think yourself as proud as the devil, you do not think yourself to be very humble.

From this opposition that there is between the nature of a true, and of a

* It is an observation of Mr. Jones, in his excellent treatise of the canon of the New Testament, that the evangelist Mark, who was the companion of St. Peter, and is supposed to have written his gospel under the direction of that apostle, when he mentions Peter's repentance after his denying his Master, does not use such strong terms to set it forth as the other evangelists; he only uses these words, "When he thought thereon, he wept," Mark xiv. 72; whereas the other evangelists say thus, "he went out and wept bitterly." Matt. xxvi. 75, Luke xxii. 62.

counterfeit humility, as to the esteem that the subjects of them have of themselves, arises a manifold contrariety of temper and behavior.

A truly humble person, having such a mean opinion of his righteousness and holiness, is poor in spirit. For a person to be poor in spirit, is to be in his own sense and apprehension poor, as to what is in him, and to be of an answerable disposition. Therefore a truly humble person, especially one eminently humble, naturally behaves himself in many respects as a poor man. "The poor useth entreaties, but the rich answereth roughly." A poor man is not disposed to quick and high resentment when he is among the rich: he is apt to yield to others, for he knows others are above him; he is not stiff and self-willed; he is patient with hard fare; he expects no other than to be despised, and takes it patiently; he does not take it heinously that he is overlooked and but little regarded; he is prepared to be in a low place; he readily honors his superiors; he takes reproofs quietly; he readily honors others as above him; he easily yields to be taught, and does not claim much to his understanding and judgment; he is not over nice or humorsome, and has his spirit subdued to hard things; he is not assuming, nor apt to take much upon him, but it is natural for him to be subject to others. Thus it is with the humble Christian. Humility is (as the great Mastricht expresses it) a kind of holy pusillanimity.

A man that is very poor is a beggar; so is he that is poor in spirit. There is a great difference between those affections that are gracious, and those that are false: under the former, the person continues still a poor beggar at God's gates, exceeding empty and needy; but the latter make men appear to themselves rich, and increased with goods, and not very necessitous; they have a great stock in their own imagination for their subsistence.*

A poor man is modest in his speech and behavior; so, and much more, and more certainly and universally, is one that is poor in spirit; he is humble and modest in his behavior amongst men. It is in vain for any to pretend that they are humble, and as little children before God, when they are haughty, assuming, and impudent in their behavior amongst men. The apostle informs us, that the design of the gospel is to cut off all glorying, not only before God, but also before men, Rom. iv. 1, 2. Some pretend to great humiliation, that are very haughty, audacious, and assuming in their external appearance and behavior: but they ought to consider those Scriptures, Psal. cxxxi. 1, "Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty; neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me." Prov. vi. 16, 17, "These six things doth the Lord hate; yea seven are an abomination unto him: a proud look, &c."—Chap. xxi. 4, "A high look, and a proud heart are sin." Psal. xviii. 27, "Thou wilt bring down high looks." And Psal. ci. 5, "Him that hath a high look, and a proud heart, I will not suffer." 1 Cor. xiii. 4, "Charity vaunteth not itself, doth not behave itself unseemly." There is a certain amiable modesty and fear that belongs to a Christian behavior among men, arising from

* "This spirit ever keeps a man poor and vile in his own eyes, and empty.—When the man hath got some knowledge, and can discourse pretty well, and hath some taste of the heavenly gift, some sweet illapses of grace, and so his conscience is pretty well quieted: and if he hath got some answer to his prayers, and hath sweet affections, he grows full: and having ease to his conscience, casts off sense, and daily groaning under sin. And hence the spirit of prayer dies: he loses his esteem of God's ordinances, feels not such need of them; or gets no good, feels no life or power by them.—This is the woful condition of some; but yet they know it not. But now he that is filled with the Spirit the Lord empties him; and the more, the longer he lives. So that though others think he needs not much grace, yet he accounts himself the poorest." *Shepard's Parable of the Ten Virgins*, Part II. p. 132.

"After all fillings, be ever empty, hungry, and feeling need, and praying for more." Ibid. p. 151.

"Truly, brethren, when I see the curse of God upon many Christians, that are now grown full of their parts, gifts, peace, comforts, abilities, duties, I stand æloring the riches of the Lord's mercy, to a little handful of poor believers, not only in making them empty, but in keeping them so all their days." *Shepard's Sound Believer*, the late edition in Boston, p. 158, 159.

humility, that the Scripture often speaks of, 1 Pet. iii. 15 "Be ready to give an answer to every man that asketh you—with meekness and fear." Romans xiii. 7, "Fear to whom fear." 2 Cor. vii. 15, "Whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling you received him." Eph. vi. 5, "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling." 1 Pet. ii. 18, "Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear." 1 Pet. iii. 2, "While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear." 1 Tim. ii. 9, "That women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety." In this respect a Christian is like a little child; a little child is modest before men, and his heart is apt to be possessed with fear and awe amongst them.

The same spirit will dispose a Christian to honor all men: 1 Pet. ii. 17, "Honor all men." A humble Christian is not only disposed to honor the saints in his behavior; but others also, in all those ways that do not imply a visible approbation of their sins. Thus Abraham, the great pattern of believers, honored the children of Heth:" Gen. xxiii. 7, "Abraham stood up, and bowed himself to the people of the land." This was a remarkable instance of a humble behavior towards them that were out of Christ, and that Abraham knew to be accursed: and therefore would by no means suffer his servant to take a wife to his son, from among them; and Esau's wives, being of these children of Heth, were a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebekah. So Paul honored Festus: Acts xxvi. 25, 'I am not mad, most noble Festus." Not only will Christian humility dispose persons to honor those wicked men that are out of the visible church, but also false brethren and persecutors. As Jacob, when he was in an excellent frame, having just been wrestling all night with God, and received the blessing, honored Esau, his false and persecuting brother: Gen. xxxiii. 3, "Jacob bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother Esau." So he called him lord; and commanded all his family to honor him in like manner.

Thus I have endeavored to describe the heart and behavior of one that is governed by a truly gracious humility, as exactly agreeable to the Scriptures as I am able.

Now, it is out of such a heart as this, that all truly holy affections do flow. Christian affections are like Mary's precious ointment that she poured on Christ's head, that filled the whole house with a sweet odor. That was poured out of an alabaster box; so gracious affections flow out to Christ out of a pure heart. That was poured out of a broken box; until the box was broken, the ointment could not flow, nor diffuse its odor; so gracious affections flow out of a broken heart. Gracious affections are also like those of Mary Magdalene (Luke vii. at the latter end), who also pours precious ointment on Christ, out of an alabaster broken box, anointing therewith the feet of Jesus, when she had washed them with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head. All gracious affections that are a sweet odor to Christ, and that fill the soul of a Christian with a heavenly sweetness and fragrancy, are broken hearted affections. A truly Christian love, either to God or men, is a humble broken hearted love. The desires of the saints, however earnest, are humble desires. Their hope is a humble hope; and their joy, even when it is unspeakable, and full of glory, is a humble broken hearted joy, and leaves the Christian more poor in spirit, and more like a little child, and more disposed to a universal lowliness of behavior.

VII. Another thing, wherein gracious affections are distinguished from others, is, that they are attended with a change of nature.

All gracious affections do arise from a spiritual understanding, in which the

soul has the excellency and glory of divine things discovered to it, as was shown before. But all spiritual discoveries are transforming; and not only make an alteration of the present exercise, sensation, and frame of the soul; but such power and efficacy have they, that they make an alteration in the very nature of the soul: 2 Cor. iii. 18, "But we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." Such power as this is properly divine power, and is peculiar to the Spirit of the Lord: other power may make an alteration in men's present frames and feelings: but it is the power of a Creator only that can change the nature, or give a new nature. And no discoveries or illuminations, but those that are divine and supernatural, will have this supernatural effect. But this effect all those discoveries have, that are truly divine. The soul is deeply affected by these discoveries, and so affected as to be transformed.

Thus it is with those affections that the soul is the subject of in its conversion. The Scripture representations of conversion do strongly imply and signify a change of nature: such as "being born again; becoming new creatures; rising from the dead; being renewed in the spirit of the mind; dying to sin, and living to righteousness; putting off the old man, and putting on the new man; a being ingrafted into a new stock; a having a divine seed implanted in the heart; a being made partakers of the divine nature," &c.

Therefore if there be no great and remarkable abiding change in persons, that think they have experienced a work of conversion, vain are all their imaginations and pretences, however they have been affected.* Conversion is a great and universal change of the man, turning him from sin to God. A man may be restrained from sin, before he is converted; but when he is converted, he is not only restrained from sin, his very heart and nature is turned from it unto holiness: so that thenceforward he becomes a holy person, and an enemy to sin. If, therefore, after a person's high affections at his supposed first conversion, it comes to that in a little time, that there is no very sensible, or remarkable alteration in him, as to those bad qualities, and evil habits, which before were visible in him, and he is ordinarily under the prevalence of the same kind of dispositions that he used to be, and the same thing seems to belong to his character; he appears as selfish, carnal, as stupid, and perverse, as unchristian and unsavory as ever; it is greater evidence against him, than the brightest story of experiences that ever was told, is for him. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision, nor uncircumcision, neither high profession, nor low profession, neither a fair story, nor a broken one, avails any thing; but a new creature.

If there be a very great alteration visible in a person for a while; if it be not abiding, but he afterwards returns, in a stated manner, to be much as he used to be; it appears to be no change of nature; for nature is an abiding thing. A swine that is of a filthy nature may be washed, but the swinish nature remains; and a dove that is of a cleanly nature may be defiled, but its cleanly nature remains.†

Indeed allowances must be made for the natural temper; conversion does

* "I would not judge of the whole soul's coming to Christ, so much by sudden pangs as by inward bent. For the whole soul, in affectionate expressions and actions, may be carried to Christ; but being without this bent, and change of affections, is unsound." *Shepard's Parable*, Part I. p. 203.

† "It is with the soul, as with water; all the cold may be gone, but the native principle of cold remains still. You may remove the burning of lusts, not the blackness of nature. Where the power of sin lies, change of conscience from security to terror, change of life from profaneness to civility, and fashions of the world, to escape the pollutions thereof, change of lusts, may quench them for a time: but the nature is never changed in the best hypocrite that ever was." *Shepard's Parable*, Part I. p. 194.

not entirely root out the natural temper; those sins which a man by his natural constitution was most inclined to before his conversion, he may be most apt to fall into still. But yet conversion will make a great alteration even with respect to these sins. Though grace, while imperfect, does not root out an evil natural temper, yet it is of great power and efficacy with respect to it, to correct it. The change that is wrought in conversion, is a universal change; grace changes a man with respect to whatever is sinful in him; the old man is put off, and the new man put on; he is sanctified throughout; and the man becomes a new creature, old things are passed away, and all things are become new; all sin is mortified, constitution sins, as well as others. If a man before his conversion, was by his natural constitution especially inclined to lasciviousness, or drunkenness, or maliciousness; converting grace will make a great alteration in him, with respect to these evil dispositions; so that however he may be still most in danger of these sins, yet they shall no longer have dominion over him; nor will they any more be properly his character. Yea, true repentance does in some respects, especially turn a man against his own iniquity, that wherein he has been most guilty, and has chiefly dishonored God. He that forsakes other sins, but saves his leading sin, the iniquity he is chiefly inclined to, is like Saul, when sent against God's enemies the Amalekites, with a strict charge to save none of them alive, but utterly to destroy them, small and great; who utterly destroyed inferior people, but saved the king, the chief of them all, alive.

Some foolishly make it an argument in favor of their discoveries and affections, that when they are gone, they are left wholly without any life or sense, or any thing beyond what they had before. They think it an evidence that what they experienced was wholly of God, and not of themselves, because (say they) when God is departed, all is gone; they can see and feel nothing, and are no better than they used to be.

It is very true, that all grace and goodness in the hearts of the saints is entirely from God; and they are universally and immediately dependent on him for it. But yet these persons are mistaken, as to the manner of God's communicating himself and his Holy Spirit, in imparting saving grace to the soul. He gives his Spirit to be united to the faculties of the soul, and to dwell there after the manner of a principle of nature; so that the soul, in being endued with grace, is endued with a new nature: but nature is an abiding thing. All the exercises of grace are entirely from Christ: but those exercises are not from Christ, as something that is alive, moves and stirs, something that is without life, and remains without life; but as having life communicated to it; so as, through Christ's power, to have inherent in itself a vital nature. In the soul where Christ savingly is, there he lives. He does not only live without it, so as violently to actuate it, but he lives in it, so that that also is alive. Grace in the soul is as much from Christ, as the light in a glass, held out in the sunbeams, is from the sun. But this represents the manner of the communication of grace to the soul, but in part; because the glass remains as it was, the nature of it not being at all changed, it is as much without any lightsomeness in its nature as ever. But the soul of a saint receives light from the Sun of righteousness, in such a manner, that its nature is changed, and it becomes properly a luminous thing; not only does the sun shine in the saints, but they also become little suns, partaking of the nature of the fountain of their light. In this respect, the manner of their derivation of light, is like that of the lamps in the tabernacle, rather than that of a reflecting glass; which, though they were lit up by fire from heaven, yet thereby became themselves burning shining things. The saints do not only

drink of the water of life, that flows from the original fountain; out this water becomes a fountain of water in them, springing up there, and flowing out of them, John iv. 14, and chap. vii. 38, 39. Grace is compared to a seed implanted, that not only is in the ground, but has hold of it, has root there, and grows there, and is an abiding principle of life and nature there.

As it is with spiritual discoveries and affections given at first conversion, so it is in all illuminations and affections of that kind, that persons are the subjects of afterwards; they are all transforming. There is a like divine power and energy in them, as in the first discoveries; and they still reach the bottom of the heart, and affect and alter the very nature of the soul, in proportion to the degree in which they are given. And a transformation of nature is continued and carried on by them, to the end of life, until it is brought to perfection in glory. Hence the progress of the work of grace in the hearts of the saints, is represented in Scripture, as a continued conversion and renovation of nature. So the apostle exhorts those that were at Rome, "beloved of God, called to be saints," and that were subjects of God's redeeming mercies, "to be transformed by the renewing of their mind:" Rom. xii. 1, 2, "I beseech you therefore, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice; and be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind;" compared with chap. i. 7. So the apostle, writing to the "saints and faithful in Christ Jesus," that were at Ephesus (Eph. i. 1), and those who were once dead in trespasses and sins, but were now quickened and raised up, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ, and created in Christ Jesus unto good works, that were once far off, but were now made nigh by the blood of Christ, and that were no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, and that were built together for a habitation of God through the Spirit; I say, the apostle writing to these, tells them, "that he ceased not to pray for them, that God would give them the spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of Christ; the eyes of their understanding being enlightened, that they might know, or experience, what was the exceeding greatness of God's power towards them that believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places," Eph. i. 16, to the end. In this the apostle has respect to the glorious power and work of God in converting and renewing the soul; as is most plain by the sequel. So the apostle exhorts the same persons "to put off the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of their minds; and to put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness," Eph. iv. 22, 23, 24.

There is a sort of high affections that some have from time to time, that leave them without any manner of appearance of an abiding effect. They go off suddenly; so that from the very height of their emotion, and seeming rapture, they pass at once to be quite dead, and void of all sense and activity. It surely is not wont to be thus with high gracious affections;* they leave a sweet savor and a relish of divine things on the heart, and a stronger bent of soul towards God and holiness. As Moses' face not only shone while he was in the mount, extraordinarily conversing with God, but it continued to shine after he came down from the mount. When men have been conversing with Christ in an extraordinary manner, there is a sensible effect of it remaining upon them; there is something remarkable in their disposition and frame, which if we take

* "Do you think the Holy Ghost comes on a man as on Balaam, by immediate acting, and then leaves him, and then he has nothing?" *Shepard's Parable*, Part I. p. 126.

knowledge of, and trace to its cause, we shall find it is because they have been with Jesus, Acts iv. 13.

VIII. Truly gracious affections differ from those affections that are false and delusive, in that they tend to, and are attended with the lamblike, dovelike spirit and temper of Jesus Christ; or in other words, they naturally beget and promote such a spirit of love, meekness, quietness, forgiveness and mercy, as appears in Christ.

The evidence of this in the Scripture is very abundant. If we judge of the nature of Christianity, and the proper spirit of the gospel, by the word of God, this spirit is what may, by way of eminency, be called the Christian spirit; and may be looked upon as the true, and distinguishing disposition of the hearts of Christians, as Christians. When some of the disciples of Christ said something, through inconsideration and infirmity, that was not agreeable to such a spirit, Christ told them, that they knew not what manner of spirit they were of, Luke ix. 55, implying that this spirit that I am speaking of, is the proper spirit of his religion and kingdom. All that are truly godly, and real disciples of Christ, have this spirit in them; and not only so, but they are of this spirit; it is the spirit by which they are so possessed and governed, that it is their true and proper character. This is evident by what the wise man says, Prov. xvii. 27 (having respect plainly to such a spirit as this): "A man of understanding is of an excellent spirit." And by the particular description Christ gives of the qualities and temper of such as are truly blessed, that shall obtain mercy, and are God's children and heirs: Matt. v. 5, 7, 9, "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." And that this spirit is the special character of the elect of God, is manifested by Col. iii. 12, 13: "Put on therefore as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another." And the apostle, speaking of that temper and disposition, which he speaks of as the most excellent and essential thing in Christianity, and that without which none are true Christians, and the most glorious profession and gifts are nothing (calling this spirit by the name of charity), he describes it thus, 1 Cor. xiii. 4, 5: "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil." And the same apostle, Gal. v, designedly declaring the distinguishing marks and fruits of true Christian grace, chiefly insists on the things that appertain to such a temper and spirit as I am speaking of, ver. 22, 23: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." And so does the Apostle James, in describing true grace, or that wisdom that is from above, with that declared design, that others who are of a contrary spirit may not deceive themselves, and lie against the truth, in professing to be Christians, when they are not, James iii. 14—17: "If ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not; and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion, and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits."

Every thing that appertains to holiness of heart, does indeed belong to the nature of true Christianity, and the character of Christians; but a spirit of holiness as appearing in some particular graces, may more especially be called the Christian spirit or temper. There are some amiable qualities and virtues,

that do more especially agree with the nature of the gospel constitution, and Christian profession; because there is a special agreeableness in them, with those divine attributes which God has more remarkably manifested and glorified in the work of redemption by Jesus Christ, that is the grand subject of the Christian revelation; and also a special agreeableness with those virtues that were so wonderfully exercised by Jesus Christ towards us in that affair, and the blessed example he hath therein set us; and likewise because they are peculiarly agreeable to the special drift and design of the work of redemption, and the benefits we thereby receive, and the relation that it brings us into, to God and one another. And these virtues are such as humility, meekness, love, forgiveness, and mercy. These things therefore especially belong to the character of Christians, as such.

These things are spoken of as what are especially the character of Jesus Christ himself, the great head of the Christian church. They are so spoken of in the prophecies of the Old Testament; as in that cited Matt. xxi. 5: "Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass." So Christ himself speaks of them, Matt. xi. 29: "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart." The same appears by the name by which Christ is so often called in Scripture, viz., the Lamb. And as these things are especially the character of Christ, so they are also especially the character of Christians. Christians are Christlike; none deserve the name of Christians, that are not so in their prevailing character. "The new man is renewed, after the image of him that created him," Col. iii. 10. All true Christians behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord, and are changed into the same image, by his Spirit, 2 Cor. iii. 18. The elect are all predestinated to be conformed to the image of the Son of God, that he might be the first born among many brethren, Rom. viii. 29. As we have borne the image of the first man, that is earthly, so we must also bear the image of the heavenly; for as is the earthly, such are they also that are earthly; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly, 1 Cor. xv. 47, 48, 49.—Christ is full of grace; and Christians all receive of his fulness, and grace for grace; i. e., there is grace in Christians answering to grace in Christ, such an answerableness as there is between the wax and the seal; there is character for character: such kind of graces, such a spirit and temper, the same things that belong to Christ's character, belong to theirs. That disposition, wherein Christ's character does in a special manner consist, therein does his image in a special manner consist. Christians that shine by reflecting the light of the Sun of righteousness, do shine with the same sort of brightness, the same mild, sweet, and pleasant beams. These lamps of the spiritual temple, that are enkindled by fire from heaven, burn with the same sort of flame. The branch is of the same nature with the stock and root, has the same sap, and bears the same sort of fruit. The members have the same kind of life with the head. It would be strange if Christians should not be of the same temper and spirit that Christ is of; when they are his flesh and his bone, yea, are one spirit, 1 Cor. vi. 17; and live so, that it is not they that live, but Christ that lives in them. A Christian spirit is Christ's mark that he sets upon the souls of his people; his seal in their foreheads, bearing his image and superscription.—Christians are the followers of Christ; and they are so, as they are obedient to that call of Christ, Matt. xi. 28, 29, "Come unto me—and learn of me: for I am meek and lowly in heart." They follow him as the Lamb: Rev. xiv. 4, "These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." True Christians are as it were clothed with the meek, quiet, and loving temper of Christ; for as many as

are in Christ, have put on Christ. And in this respect the church is clothed with the sun, not only by being clothed with his imputed righteousness, but also by being adorned with his graces, Rom. xiii. 14. Christ, the great Shepherd, is himself a Lamb, and believers are also lambs; all the flock are lambs: John xxi. 15, "Feed my lambs." Luke x. 3, "I send you forth as lambs in the midst of wolves." The redemption of the church by Christ from the power of the devil, was typified of old, by David's delivering the lamb out of the mouth of the lion and the bear.

That such manner of virtue as has been spoken of, is the very nature of the Christian spirit, or the spirit that worketh in Christ, and in his members, and in the distinguishing nature of it, is evident by this, that the dove is the very symbol or emblem, chosen of God, to represent it. Those things are fittest emblems of other things, which do best represent that which is most distinguishing in their nature. The Spirit that descended on Christ, when he was anointed of the Father, descended on him like a dove. The dove is a noted emblem of meekness, harmlessness, peace and love. But the same Spirit that descended on the head of the church, descends to the members. "God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into their hearts," Gal. iv. 6. And "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his," Rom. viii. 9. There is but one Spirit to the whole mystical body, head and members, 1 Cor. vi. 17, Eph. iv. 4. Christ breathes his own Spirit on his disciples, John xx. 22. As Christ was anointed with the Holy Ghost, descending on him like a dove, so Christians also "have an anointing from the Holy One," 1 John ii. 20, 27. And they are anointed with the same oil; it is the same "precious ointment on the head, that goes down to the skirts of the garments." And on both, it is a spirit of peace and love. Psalm cxxxiii. 1, 2, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is, for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments." The oil on Aaron's garments had the same sweet and inimitable odor with that on his head; the smell of the same sweet spices, Christian affections, and a Christian behavior, is but the flowing out of the savor of Christ's sweet ointments. Because the church has a dovelike temper and disposition, therefore it is said of her that she has doves' eyes, Cant. i. 15: "Behold, thou art fair, my love, behold, thou art fair, thou hast doves' eyes." And chap. iv. 1, "Behold, thou art fair, my love, behold, thou art fair, thou hast doves' eyes within thy locks." The same that is said of Christ, chap. vi. 12: "His eyes are as the eyes of doves." And the church is frequently compared to a dove in Scripture: Cant. ii. 14, "O, my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock." Chap. v. 2, "Open to me, my love, my dove." And chap. vi. 9, "My dove, my undefiled is but one." Psal. lxviii. 13, "Ye shall be as the wings of a dove, covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold." And lxxiv. 19, "O deliver not the soul of thy turtle dove unto the multitude of the wicked." The dove that Noah sent out of the ark, that could find no rest for the sole of her foot, until she returned, was a type of a true saint.

Meekness is so much the character of the saints, that the meek and the godly, are used as synonymous terms in Scripture: so Psalm xxxvii. 10, 11, the wicked and the meek are set in opposition one to another, as wicked and godly: "Yet a little while and the wicked shall not be; but the meek shall inherit the earth." So Psal. cxlvii. 6, "The Lord lifteth up the meek: he casteth the wicked down to the ground."

It is doubtless very much on this account, that Christ represents all his disciples, all the heirs of heaven, as little children: Matt. xix. 14, "Suffer little

children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Matt. x. 42, "Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones, a cup of cold water, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward." Matt. xviii. 6, "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones, &c." Ver. 10, "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones." Ver. 14, "It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish." John xiii. 33, "Little children, yet a little while I am with you." Little children are innocent and harmless; they do not do a great deal of mischief in the world; men need not be afraid of them; they are no dangerous sort of persons; their anger does not last long, they do not lay up injuries in high resentment, entertaining deep and rooted malice. So Christians, in malice, are children, 1 Cor. xiv. 20. Little children are not guileful and deceitful, but plain and simple; they are not versed in the arts of fiction and deceit; and are strangers to artful disguises. They are yieldable and flexible, and not wilful and obstinate; do not trust to their own understanding, but rely on the instructions of parents, and others of superior understanding. Here is therefore a fit and lively emblem of the followers of the Lamb. Persons being thus like little children, is not only a thing highly commendable, and what Christians approve and aim at, and which some extraordinary proficiency do attain to: but it is their universal character, and absolutely necessary in order to entering into the kingdom of heaven: Matt xviii. 3, "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Mark x. 15, "Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein."

But here some may be ready to say, Is there no such thing as Christian fortitude, and boldness for Christ, being good soldiers in the Christian warfare, and coming out boldly against the enemies of Christ and his people?

To which I answer, There doubtless is such a thing. The whole Christian life is compared to a warfare, and fitly so. And the most eminent Christians are the best soldiers, endued with the greatest degrees of Christian fortitude. And it is the duty of God's people to be steadfast and vigorous in their opposition to the designs and ways of such as are endeavoring to overthrow the kingdom of Christ, and the interest of religion. But yet many persons seem to be quite mistaken concerning the nature of Christian fortitude. It is an exceeding diverse thing from a brutal fierceness, or the boldness of the beasts of prey. True Christian fortitude consists in strength of mind, through grace, exerted in two things; in ruling and suppressing the evil and unruly passions and affections of the mind; and in steadfastly and freely exerting, and following good affections and dispositions, without being hindered by sinful fear, or the opposition of enemies. But the passions that are restrained and kept under, in the exercise of this Christian strength and fortitude, are those very passions that are vigorously and violently exerted in a false boldness for Christ. And those affections that are vigorously exerted in true fortitude, are those Christian, holy affections that are directly contrary to them. Though Christian fortitude appears, in withstanding and counteracting the enemies that are without us; yet it much more appears, in resisting and suppressing the enemies that are within us; because they are our worst and strongest enemies, and have greatest advantage against us. The strength of the good soldier of Jesus Christ appears in nothing more, than in steadfastly maintaining the holy calm, meekness, sweetness, and benevolence of his mind, amidst all the storms, injuries, strange behavior, and surprising acts and events of this evil and unreasonable world

The Scripture seems to intimate that true fortitude consists chiefly in this: Prov. xvi. 32, "He that is slow to anger, is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city."

The directest and surest way in the world, to make a right judgment what a holy fortitude is, in fighting with God's enemies, is to look to the Captain of all God's hosts, and our great leader and example, and see wherein his fortitude and valor appeared, in his chief conflict, and in the time of the greatest battle that ever was, or ever will be fought with these enemies, when he fought with them alone, and of the people there was none with him, and exercised his fortitude in the highest degree that ever he did, and got that glorious victory that will be celebrated in the praises and triumphs of all the hosts of heaven, throughout all eternity; even to Jesus Christ in the time of his last sufferings, when his enemies in earth and hell made their most violent attack upon him, compassing him round on every side, like renting and roaring lions. Doubtless here we shall see the fortitude of a holy warrior and champion in the cause of God, in its highest perfection and greatest lustre, and an example fit for the soldiers to follow that fight under this Captain. But how did he show his holy boldness and valor at that time? Not in the exercise of any fiery passions; not in fierce and violent speeches, and vehemently declaiming against and crying out of the intolerable wickedness of opposers, giving them their own in plain terms: but in not opening his mouth when afflicted and oppressed, in going as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before his shearers is dumb, not opening his mouth; praying that the Father would forgive his cruel enemies because they knew not what they did; not shedding others' blood, but with all conquering patience and love, shedding his own. Indeed one of his disciples, that made a forward pretence to boldness for Christ, and confidently declared he would sooner die with Christ than deny him, began to lay about him with a sword: but Christ meekly rebukes him, and heals the wound he gives. And never was the patience, meekness, love, and forgiveness of Christ in so glorious a manifestation, as at that time. Never did he appear so much a lamb, and never did he show so much of the dovelike spirit, as at that time. If therefore we see any of the followers of Christ, in the midst of the most violent, unreasonable, and wicked opposition of God's and his own enemies, maintaining under all this temptation, the humility, quietness, and gentleness of a lamb, and the harmlessness, and love and sweetness of a dove, we may well judge that here is a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

When persons are fierce and and violent, and exert their sharp and bitter passions, it shows weakness instead of strength and fortitude. 1 Cor. iii. at the beginning, "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?"

There is a pretended boldness for Christ that arises from no better principle than pride. A man may be forward to expose himself to the dislike of the world, and even to provoke their displeasure out of pride. For it is the nature of spiritual pride to cause men to seek distinction and singularity; and so oftentimes to set themselves at war with those that they call carnal, that they may be more highly exalted among their party. True boldness for Christ is universal, and overcomes all, and carries men above the displeasure of friends and foes; so that they will forsake all rather than Christ; and will rather offend all parties, and be thought meanly of by all, than offend Christ. And that duty which tries whether a man is willing to be despised by them that are of his own

party, and thought the least worthy to be regarded by them, is a much more proper trial of his boldness for Christ, than his being forward to expose himself to the reproach of opposers. The apostle sought not glory, not only of Heathens and Jews, but of Christians; as he declares, 1 Thess. ii. 6.* He is bold for Christ, that has Christian fortitude enough, to confess his fault openly, when he has committed one that requires it, and as it were to come down upon his knees before opposers. Such things as these are of vastly greater evidence of holy boldness, than resolutely and fiercely confronting opposers.

As some are much mistaken concerning the nature of true boldness for Christ, so they are concerning Christian zeal. It is indeed a flame, but a sweet one; or rather it is the heat and fervor of a sweet flame. For the flame of which it is the heat, is no other than that of divine love, or Christian charity; which is the sweetest and most benevolent thing that is, or can be, in the heart of man or angel. Zeal is the fervor of this flame, as it ardently and vigorously goes out towards the good that is its object, in desires of it, and pursuit after it; and so consequentially, in opposition to the evil that is contrary to it, and impedes it. There is indeed opposition, and vigorous opposition, that is a part of it, or rather is an attendant of it; but it is against things, and not persons. Bitterness against the persons of men is no part of it, but is very contrary to it; insomuch that so much the warmer true zeal is, and the higher it is raised, so much the farther are persons from such bitterness, and so much fuller of love, both to the evil and to the good. As appears from what has been just now observed, that it is no other, in its very nature and essence, than the fervor of a spirit of Christian love. And as to what opposition there is in it to things, it is firstly and chiefly against the evil things in the person himself, who has this zeal: against the enemies of God and holiness, that are in his own heart (as these are most in view, and what he has most to do with); and but secondarily against the sins of others. And therefore there is nothing in a true Christian zeal, that is contrary to that spirit of meekness, gentleness, and love, that spirit of a little child, a lamb and dove, that has been spoken of; but it is entirely agreeable to it, and tends to promote it.

But to say something particularly concerning this Christian spirit I have been speaking of, as exercised in these three things, forgiveness, love, and mercy; I would observe that the Scripture is very clear and express concerning the absolute necessity of each of these, as belonging to the temper and character of every Christian.

It is so as to a forgiving spirit, or a disposition to overlook and forgive injuries. Christ gives it to us both as a negative and positive evidence; and is express in teaching us, that if we are of such a spirit, it is a sign that we are in a state of forgiveness and favor ourselves: and that if we are not of such a spirit, we are not forgiven of God; and seems to take special care that we should take good notice of it, and always bear it on our minds: Matt. vi. 12, 14, 15, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Christ expresses the same again at another time, Mark xi. 25, 26, and again in Matt. xviii. 22, to the end, in the parable of the servant that owed his lord ten thousand talents, that would not forgive his fellow servant a hundred pence; and therefore was delivered to the tormentors. In the application

* Mr. Shepard, speaking of hypocrites affecting applause, says, "Hence men forsake their friends, and trample under foot the scorns of the world: they have credit elsewhere. To maintain their interest in the love of godly men, they will suffer much." *Parable of the Ten Virgins*, Part I. p. 180.

of the parable Christ says, ver. 35, "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."

And that all true saints are of a loving, benevolent, and beneficent temper, the Scripture is very plain and abundant. Without it the apostle tells us, though we should speak with the tongues of men and angels, we are as a sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal; and that though we have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, yet without this spirit we are nothing. And there is no one virtue or disposition of the mind, that is so often, and so expressly insisted on, in the marks that are laid down in the New Testament, whereby to know true Christians. It is often given as a sign that is peculiarly distinguishing, by which all may know Christ's disciples, and by which they may know themselves; and is often laid down, both as a negative and positive evidence. Christ calls the law of love, by way of eminency, his commandment: John xiii. 34, "A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." And chap. xv. 12, "This is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you." And ver. 17, "These things I command you, that ye love one another." And says, chap. xiii. 35, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." And chap. xiv. 21 (still with a special reference to this which he calls his commandment), "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." The beloved disciple who had so much of this sweet temper himself, abundantly insists on it, in his epistles. There is none of the apostles so much in laying down express signs of grace, for professors to try themselves by, as he; and in his signs, he insists scarcely on any thing else, but a spirit of Christian love, and an agreeable practice: 1 John ii. 9, 10, "He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him." Chap. iii. 14, "We know that we are passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren: he that loveth not his brother abideth in death." Ver. 18, 19, "My little children, let us not love in word and in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him." Ver. 23, 24, "This is his commandment, that we should love one another. And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him; and hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us." Chap. iv. 7, 8, "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth, is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God: for God is love." Ver. 12, 13, "No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, because he hath given us of his Spirit." Ver. 16, "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." Ver. 20, "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?"

And the Scripture is as plain as it is possible it should be, that none are true saints, but those whose true character it is, that they are of a disposition to pity and relieve their fellow creatures, that are poor, indigent, and afflicted: Psal. xxxvii. 21, "The righteous showeth mercy, and giveth." Ver. 26, "He is ever merciful, and lendeth." Psal. cxii. 5, "A good man showeth favor, and lendeth." Ver. 9, "He hath dispersed abroad, and given to the poor." Prov. xiv. 31, "He that honoreth God, hath mercy on the poor." Prov. xxi. 26, "The righteous giveth, and spareth not." Jer. xxii. 16, "He judged the cause of the poor and needy,

then it was well with him: Was not this to know me? saith the Lord." Jam. i. 27, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction," &c. Hos. vi. 6, "For I have desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God, more than burnt offerings." Matt. v. 7, "Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy." 2 Cor. viii. 8, "I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love." Jam. ii. 13—16, "For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy. What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food; and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be you warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body, what doth it profit?" 1 John iii. 17, "Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" Christ in that description he gives us of the day of judgment, Matt. xxv. (which is the most particular that we have in the Bible), represents that judgment will be passed at that day, according as men have been found to have been of a merciful spirit and practice, or otherwise. Christ's design in giving such a description of the process of that day, is plainly to possess all his followers with that apprehension, that unless this was their spirit and practice, there was no hope of their being accepted and owned by him at that day. Therefore this is an apprehension that we ought to be possessed with. We find in Scripture, that a righteous man, and a merciful man are synonymous expressions, Isa: lvii. 1, "The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come."

Thus we see how full, clear, and abundant, the evidence from Scripture is, that those who are truly gracious, are under the government of that lamblike, dovelike Spirit of Jesus Christ, and that this is essentially and eminently the nature of the saving grace of the gospel, and the proper spirit of true Christianity. We may therefore undoubtedly determine, that all truly Christian affections are attended with such a spirit, and that this is the natural tendency of the fear and hope, the sorrow and the joy, the confidence and the zeal of true Christians.

None will understand me, that true Christians have no remains of a contrary spirit, and can never, in any instances, be guilty of a behavior disagreeable to such a spirit. But this I affirm, and shall affirm, until I deny the Bible to be any thing worth, that every thing in Christians that belongs to true Christianity, is of this tendency, and works this way; and that there is no true Christian upon earth, but is so under the prevailing power of such a spirit, that he is properly denominated from it, and it is truly and justly his character: and that therefore ministers, and others, have no warrant from Christ to encourage persons that are of a contrary character and behavior, to think they are converted, because they tell a fair story of illuminations and discoveries. In so doing, they would set up their own wisdom against Christ's, and judge without, and against that rule by which Christ has declared all men should know his disciples. Some persons place religion so much in certain transient illuminations and impressions (especially if they are in such a particular method and order), and so little in the spirit and temper persons are of, that they greatly deform religion, and form notions of Christianity quite different from what it is, as delineated in the Scriptures. The Scripture knows of no such true Christians, as are of a sordid, selfish, cross and contentious spirit. Nothing can be invented

that is a greater absurdity, than a morose, hard, close, high-spirited, spiteful, true Christian. We must learn the way of bringing men to rules, and not rules to men, and so strain and stretch the rules of God's word, to take in ourselves, and some of our neighbors, until we make them wholly of none effect.

It is true, that allowances must be made for men's natural temper, with regard to these things, as well as others; but not such allowances, as to allow men, that once were wolves and serpents, to be now converted, without any remarkable change in the spirit of their mind. The change made by true conversion is wont to be most remarkable and sensible, with respect to that which before was the wickedness the person was most notoriously guilty of. Grace has as great a tendency to restrain and mortify such sins, as are contrary to the spirit that has been spoken of, as it is to mortify drunkenness or lasciviousness. Yea, the Scripture represents the change wrought by gospel grace, as especially appearing in an alteration of the former sort: Isa. xi. 6—9, "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid: and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed, their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." And to the same purpose is Isa. lxv. 25. Accordingly we find, that in the primitive times of the Christian church, converts were remarkably changed in this respect: Tit. iii. 3, &c., "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared—he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." And Col. iii. 7, 8, "In the which ye also walked sometime, when ye lived in them. But now ye also put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communications out of your mouth."

IX. Gracious affections soften the heart, and are attended and followed with a Christian tenderness of spirit.

False affections, however persons may seem to be melted by them while they are new, yet have a tendency in the end to harden the heart. A disposition to some kind of passions may be established; such as imply self-seeking, self-exaltation, and opposition to others. But false affections, with the delusion that attends them, finally tend to stupify the mind, and shut it up against those affections wherein tenderness of heart consists: and the effect of them at last is, that persons in the settled frame of their minds, become less affected with their present and past sins, and less conscientious with respect to future sins, less moved with the warnings and cautions of God's word, or God's chastisements in his providence, more careless of the frame of their hearts, and the manner and tendency of their behavior, less quicksighted to discern what is sinful, less afraid of the appearance of evil, than they were while they were under legal awakenings and fears of hell. Now they have been the subjects of such and such impressions and affections, and have a high opinion of themselves, and look on their state to be safe; they can be much more easy than before, in living in the neglect of duties that are troublesome and inconvenient; and are much more slow and partial in complying with difficult commands; are in no measure so alarmed at the appearance of their own defects and transgressions; are emboldened to favor themselves more, with respect to the labor, and painful care

and exactness in their walk, and more easily yield to temptations, and the solicitations of their lusts; and have far less care of their behavior, when they come into the holy presence of God, in the time of public or private worship. Formerly it may be, under legal convictions, they took much pains in religion, and denied themselves in many things: but now they think themselves out of danger of hell, they very much put off the burden of the cross, and save themselves the trouble of difficult duties, and allow themselves more in the enjoyment of their ease and their lusts.

Such persons as these, instead of embracing Christ as their Saviour from sin, trust in him as the Saviour of their sins; instead of flying to him as their refuge from their spiritual enemies, they make use of him as the defence of their spiritual enemies, from God, and to strengthen them against him. They make Christ the minister of sin, and great officer and vicegerent of the devil, to strengthen his interest, and make him above all things in the world strong against Jehovah; so that they may sin against him with good courage, and without any fear, being effectually secured from restraints, by his most solemn warnings and most awful threatenings. They trust in Christ to preserve to them the quiet enjoyment of their sins, and to be their shield to defend them from God's displeasure; while they come close to him, even to his bosom, the place of his children, to fight against him, with their mortal weapons, hid under their skirts.* However, some of these, at the same time, make a great profession of love to God, and assurance of his favor, and great joy in tasting the sweetness of his love.

After this manner they trusted in Christ, that the Apostle Jude speaks of, who crept in among the saints unknown; but were really ungodly men, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, Jude 4. These are they that trust in their being righteous; and because God has promised that the righteous shall surely live, or certainly be saved, are therefore emboldened to commit iniquity, whom God threatens in Ezek. xxxiii. 13: "When I shall say to the righteous, that he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity; all his righteousness shall not be remembered, but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it."

Gracious affections are of a quite contrary tendency; they turn a heart of stone more and more into a heart of flesh. A holy love and hope are principles that are vastly more efficacious upon the heart, to make it tender, and to fill it with a dread of sin, or whatever might displease and offend God, and to engage it to watchfulness, and care, and strictness, than a slavish fear of hell. Gracious affections, as was observed before, flow out of a contrite heart, or (as the word signifies) a bruised heart, bruised and broken with godly sorrow; which makes the heart tender, as bruised flesh is tender, and easily hurt. Godly sorrow has much greater influence to make the heart tender, than mere legal sorrow from selfish principles.

The tenderness of the heart of a true Christian, is elegantly signified by our Saviour, in his comparing such a one to a little child. The flesh of a little child is very tender; so is the heart of one that is new born. This is represented in what we are told of Naaman's cure of his leprosy, by his washing in Jordan;

* "These are hypocrites that believe, but fail in regard of the use of the gospel, and of the Lord Jesus. And these we read of, Jude 3, viz., of some men that did turn grace into wantonness. For therein appears the exceeding evil of man's heart, that not only the law, but also the glorious gospel of the Lord Jesus, works in him all manner of unrighteousness. And it is too common for men at the first work of conversion, Oh then to cry for grace and Christ, and afterwards grow licentious, live and lie in the breach of the law, and take their warrant for their course from the gospel!" *Shepard's Parable*, Part 1. page 126.

which was undoubtedly a type of the renewing of the soul, by washing in the laver of regeneration. We are told, 2 Kings v. 14, "That he went down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God; and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child." Not only is the flesh of a little child tender, but his mind is tender. A little child has his heart easily moved, wrought upon and bowed: so is a Christian in spiritual things. A little child is apt to be affected with sympathy, to weep with them that weep, and cannot well bear to see others in distress: so it is with a Christian, John xi. 25, Rom. xii. 15, 1 Cor. xii. 26. A little child is easily won by kindness: so is a Christian. A little child is easily affected with grief at temporal evils, and has his heart melted, and falls a weeping: thus tender is the heart of a Christian, with regard to the evil of sin. A little child is easily affrighted at the appearance of outward evils, or any thing that threatens its hurt: so is a Christian apt to be alarmed at the appearance of moral evil, and any thing that threatens the hurt of the soul. A little child, when it meets enemies, or fierce beasts, is not apt to trust its own strength, but flies to its parents for refuge: so a saint is not self-confident in engaging spiritual enemies, but flies to Christ. A little child is apt to be suspicious of evil in places of danger, afraid in the dark, afraid when left alone, or far from home: so is a saint apt to be sensible of his spiritual dangers, jealous of himself, full of fear when he cannot see his way plain before him, afraid to be left alone, and to be at a distance from God: Prov. xxviii. 14, "Happy is the man that feareth alway: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief." A little child is apt to be afraid of superiors, and to dread their anger, and tremble at their frowns and threatenings: so is a true saint with respect to God: Psal. cxix. 120, "My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments." Isa. lxvi. 2, "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and trembleth at my word." ver. 5, "Hear ye the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word." Ezra. ix. 4, "Then were assembled unto me every one that trembled at the words of the God of Israel." Chap. x. 3, "According to the counsel of my Lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God." A little child approaches superiors with awe: so do the saints approach God with holy awe and reverence: Job xiii. 2, "Shall not his excellency make you afraid? And his dread fall upon you?" Holy fear is so much the nature of true godliness, that it is called in Scripture by no other name more frequently, than the fear of God.

Hence gracious affections do not tend to make men bold, forward, noisy, and boisterous; but rather to speak trembling: Hos. xiii. 1, "When Ephraim spake trembling, he exalted himself in Israel; but when he offended in Baal, he died;" and to clothe with a kind of holy fear in all their behavior towards God and man; agreeably to Psal. ii. 11, 1 Pet. iii. 15, 2 Cor. vii. 15, Eph. vi. 5, 1 Pet. iii. 2, Rom. xi. 20.

But here some may object and say, is there no such thing as a holy boldness in prayer, and the duties of divine worship? I answer, there is doubtless such a thing; and it is chiefly to be found in eminent saints, persons of great degrees of faith and love. But this holy boldness is not in the least opposite to reverence; though it be to disunion and servility. It abolishes or lessens that disposition which arises from moral distance or alienation; and also distance of relation, as that of a slave; but not at all, that which becomes the natural distance, whereby we are infinitely inferior. No boldness in poor sinful worms of the dust, that have a right sight of God and themselves, will prompt them to approach to God with less fear and reverence, than spotless and glorious angels

in heaven, who cover their faces before his throne, Isa vi., at the beginning Rebecca (who in her marriage with Isaac, in almost all its circumstances, was manifestly a great type of the church, the spouse of Christ) when she meets Isaac, lights off from her camel, and takes a vail and covers herself; although she was brought to him as his bride, to be with him in the nearest relation, and most intimate union, that mankind are ever united one to another.* Elijah, that great prophet, who had so much holy familiarity with God, at a time of special nearness to God, even when he conversed with him in the mount, wrapped his face in his mantle. Which was not because he was terrified with any servile fear, by the terrible wind, and earthquake, and fire; but after these were all over, and God spake to him as a friend, in a still small voice: 1 Kings xix. 12, 13, "And after the fire, a still small voice; and it was so, when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle." And Moses, with whom God spake face to face, as a man speaks with his friend, and was distinguished from all the prophets, in the familiarity with God that he was admitted to; at a time when he was brought nearest of all, when God showed him his glory in that same mount where he afterwards spake to Elijah: "He made haste, and bowed his head towards the earth, and worshipped," Exod. xxxiv. 8. There is in some persons a most unsuitable and unsufferable boldness, in their addresses to the great Jehovah, in an affectation of a holy boldness, and ostentation of eminent nearness and familiarity; the very thoughts of which would make them shrink into nothing, with horror and confusion, if they saw the distance that is between God and them. They are like the Pharisee, that boldly came up near, in a confidence of his own eminency in holiness. Whereas, if they saw their vileness, they would be more like the publican, that "stood afar off, and durst not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven; but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner." It becomes such sinful creatures as we, to approach a holy God (although with faith, and without terror, yet) with contrition, and penitent shame and confusion of face. It is foretold that this should be the disposition of the church, in the time of her highest privileges on earth in her latter day of glory, when God should remarkably comfort her, by revealing his covenant mercy to her, Ezek. xvi. 60, to the end: "I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant. Then thou shalt remember thy ways and be ashamed.—And I will establish my covenant with thee, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord; that thou mayest remember and be confounded and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God." The woman that we read of in the 7th chapter of Luke, that was an eminent saint, and had much of that true love which casts out fear, by Christ's own testimony, ver. 47, she approached Christ in an amiable and acceptable manner, when she came with that humble modesty, reverence and shame, when she stood at his feet, weeping behind him, as not being fit to appear before his face, and washed his feet with her tears.

One reason why gracious affections are attended with this tenderness of spirit which has been spoken of, is, that true grace tends to promote convictions of conscience. Persons are wont to have convictions of conscience before they have any grace: and if afterwards they are truly converted, and have true repentance, and joy, and peace in believing; this has a tendency to put an end to terrors, but has no tendency to put an end to convictions of sin, but to increase

* Dr. Ames, in his Cases of Conscience, Book III. chap. iv., speaks of a holy modesty in the worship of God as one sign of true humility.

them. It does not stupify man's conscience; but makes it more sensible, more easily and thoroughly discerning the sinfulness of that which is sinful, and receiving a greater conviction of the heinous and dreadful nature of sin, susceptive of a quicker and deeper sense of it, and more convinced of his own sinfulness and wickedness of his heart; and consequently it has a tendency to make him more jealous of his heart. Grace tends to give the soul a further and better conviction of the same things concerning sin, that it was convinced of, under a legal work of the Spirit of God; viz., its great contrariety to the will, and law, and honor of God, the greatness of God's hatred of it, and displeasure against it, and the dreadful punishment it exposes to and deserves. And not only so, but it convinces the soul of something further concerning sin, that it saw nothing of, while only under legal convictions; and that is the infinitely hateful nature of sin, and its dreadfulness upon that account. And this makes the heart tender with respect to sin; like David's heart, that smote him when he had cut off Saul's skirt. The heart of a true penitent is like a burnt child that dreads the fire. Whereas, on the contrary, he that has had a counterfeit repentance, and false comforts and joys, is like iron that has been suddenly heated and quenched; it becomes much harder than before. A false conversion puts an end to convictions of conscience; and so either takes away, or much diminishes that conscientiousness, which was manifested under a work of the law.

All gracious affections have a tendency to promote this Christian tenderness of heart, that has been spoken of; not only a godly sorrow, but also a gracious joy: Psal. ii. 11, "Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling." As also a gracious hope: Psal. xxxiii. 18, "Behold the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him; upon them that hope in his mercy." And Psal. cxlvii. 11, "The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy." Yea, the most confident and assured hope, that is truly gracious, has this tendency. The higher a holy hope is raised, the more there is of this Christian tenderness. The banishing of a servile fear, by a holy assurance, is attended with a proportionable increase of a reverential fear. The diminishing of the fear of the fruits of God's displeasure in future punishment, is attended with a proportionable increase of fear of his displeasure itself; the diminishing of the fear of hell, with an increase of the fear of sin. The vanishing of jealousies of the person's state, is attended with a proportionable increase of jealousies of his heart, in a distrust of its strength, wisdom, stability, faithfulness, &c. The less apt he is to be afraid of natural evil, having his heart fixed, trusting in God, and so not afraid of evil tidings; the more apt he is to be alarmed, with the appearance of moral evil, or the evil of sin. As he has more holy boldness, so he has less of self-confidence, and a forward assuming boldness, and more modesty. As he is more sure than others of deliverance from hell, so he has more of a sense of the desert of it. He is less apt than others to be shaken in faith; but more apt than others to be moved with solemn warnings, and with God's frowns, and with the calamities of others. He has the firmest comfort, but the softest heart: richer than others, but the poorest of all in spirit: the tallest and strongest saint, but the least and tenderest child among them.

X. Another thing wherein those affections that are truly gracious and holy, differ from those that are false, is beautiful symmetry and proportion.

Not that the symmetry of the virtues, and gracious affections of the saints, in this life is perfect: it oftentimes is in many things defective, through the imperfection of grace, for want of proper instructions, through errors in judgment, or some particular unhappiness of natural temper, or defects in education, and

many other disadvantages that might be mentioned. But yet there is, in no wise, that monstrous disproportion in gracious affections, and the various parts of true religion in the saints, that is very commonly to be observed, in the false religion, and counterfeit graces, of hypocrites.

In the truly holy affections of the saints is found that proportion, which is the natural consequence of the universality of their sanctification. They have the whole image of Christ upon them: they have put off the old man, and have put on the new man entire in all its parts and members. It hath pleased the Father that in Christ all fulness should dwell: there is in him every grace; he is full of grace and truth: and they that are Christ's, do, "of his fulness receive grace for grace" (John i. 14, 16); i. e., there is every grace in them which is in Christ; grace for grace; that is, grace answerable to grace: there is no grace in Christ, but there is its image in believers to answer it: the image is a true image; and there is something of the same beautiful proportion in the image, which is in the original; there is feature for feature, and member for member. There is symmetry and beauty in God's workmanship. The natural body, which God hath made, consists of many members; and all are in a beautiful proportion: so it is in the new man, consisting of various graces and affections. The body of one that was born a perfect child, may fail of exact proportion through distemper, and the weakness and wounds of some of its members; yet the disproportion is in no measure like that of those that are born monsters.

It is with hypocrites, as it was with Ephraim of old, at a time when God greatly complains of their hypocrisy, Hos. vii. 8: "Ephraim is a cake not turned," half roasted and half raw: there is commonly no manner of uniformity in their affections.

There is in many of them a great partiality with regard to the several kinds of religious affections; great affections in some things, and no manner of proportion in others. A holy hope and holy fear go together in the saints, as has been observed from Psal. xxxiii. 18, and cxlvii. 11. But in some of these is the most confident hope, while they are void of reverence, self-jealousy and caution, to a great degree cast off fear. In the saints, joy and holy fear go together, though the joy be never so great: as it was with the disciples, in that joyful morning of Christ's resurrection, Matt. xxviii. 8: "And they departed quickly from the sepulchre, with fear and great joy."* But many of these rejoice without trembling: their joy is of that sort, that it is truly opposite to godly fear.

But particularly one great difference between saints and hypocrites is this, that the joy and comfort of the former is attended with godly sorrow and mourning for sin. They have not only sorrow to prepare them for their first comfort, but after they are comforted, and their joy established. As it is foretold of the church of God, that they should mourn and loathe themselves for their sins, after they were returned from the captivity, and were settled in the land of Canaan, the land of rest, and the land that flows with milk and honey, Ezek. xx. 42, 43: "And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall bring you into the land of Israel, into the country for the which I lifted up mine hand to give it to your fathers. And there shall ye remember your ways, and all your doings, wherein ye have been defiled, and ye shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils that ye have committed." As also in Ezek. xvi. 61, 62, 63.

* "Renewed care and diligence follows the sealings of the Spirit. Now is the soul at the foot of Christ, as Mary was at the sepulchre, with fear and great joy. He that travels the road with a rich treasure about him, is afraid of a thief in every bush." *Flavel's Sacramental Meditations*, Med. 4.

A true saint is like a little child in this respect; he never had any godly sorrow before he was born again; but since has it often in exercise: as a little child, before it is born, and while it remains in darkness, never cries; but as soon as it sees the light, it begins to cry; and thenceforward is often crying. Although Christ hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows, so that we are freed from the sorrow of punishment, and may now sweetly feed upon the comforts Christ hath purchased for us; yet that hinders not but that our feeding on these comforts should be attended with the sorrow of repentance. As of old, the children of Israel were commanded, evermore to feed upon the paschal lamb, with bitter herbs. True saints are spoken of in Scripture, not only as those that have mourned for sin, but as those that do mourn, whose manner it is still to mourn: Matt. v. 4, "Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted."

Not only is there often in hypocrites an essential deficiency as to the various kinds of religious affections, but also a strange partiality and disproportion, in the same affections, with regard to different objects.

Thus, as to the affection of love, some make high pretences, and a great show of love to God and Christ, and it may be, have been greatly affected with what they have heard or thought concerning them: but they have not a spirit of love and benevolence towards men, but are disposed to contention, envy, revenge, and evil speaking; and will, it may be, suffer an old grudge to rest in their bosoms towards a neighbor, for seven years together, if not twice seven years; living in real ill will and bitterness of spirit towards him: and it may be in their dealings with their neighbors, are not very strict and conscientious in observing the rule of "doing to others as they would that they should do to them." And, on the other hand, there are others that appear as if they had a great deal of benevolence to men, are very good natured and generous in their way, but have no love to God.

And as to love to men, there are some that have flowing affections to some; but their love is far from being of so extensive and universal a nature, as a truly Christian love is. They are full of dear affections to some, and full of bitterness towards others. They are knit to their own party, them that approve of them, love them and admire them; but are fierce against those that oppose and dislike them. Matt. v. 45, 46, "Be like your Father which is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise upon the evil, and on the good. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same?" Some show a great affection to their neighbors, and pretend to be ravished with the company of the children of God abroad; and at the same time are uncomfortable and churlish towards their wives and other near relations at home, and are very negligent of relative duties. And as to the great love to sinners and opposers of religion, and the great concern for their souls, that there is an appearance of in some, even to extreme distress and agony, singling out a particular person, from among a multitude, for its object, there being at the same time no general compassion to sinners, that are in equally miserable circumstances, but what is in a monstrous disproportion; this seems not to be of the nature of gracious affection. Not that I suppose it to be at all strange, that pity to the perishing souls of sinners should be to a degree of agony, if other things are answerable: or that a truly gracious compassion to souls should be exercised much more to some persons than others that are equally miserable, especially on some particular occasions: there may many things happen to fix the mind, and affect the heart, with respect to a particular person, at such a juncture; and without doubt some saints have been in great distress for the souls of particular persons, so as to be as it were in travail for them; but when per-

sons appear, at particular times, in racking agonies for the soul of some single person, far beyond what has been usually heard or read of in eminent saints, but appear to be persons that have a spirit of meek and fervent love, charity, and compassion to mankind in general, in a far less degree than they: I say, such agonies are greatly to be suspected, for reasons already given; viz., that the Spirit of God is wont to give graces and gracious affections in a beautiful symmetry and proportion.

And as there is a monstrous disproportion in the love of some, in its exercises towards different persons, so there is in their seeming exercises of love towards the same persons.—Some men show a love to others as to their outward man, they are liberal of their worldly substance, and often give to the poor; but have no love to, or concern for the souls of men. Others pretend a great love to men's souls, that are not compassionate and charitable towards their bodies. The making a great show of love, pity and distress for souls, costs them nothing; but in order to show mercy to men's bodies, they must part with money out of their pockets. But a true Christian love to our brethren extends both to their souls and bodies; and herein is like the love and compassion of Jesus Christ. He showed mercy to men's souls, by laboring for them, in preaching the gospel to them; and showed mercy to their bodies in going about doing good, healing all manner of sickness and diseases among the people. We have a remarkable instance of Christ's having compassion at once both to men's souls and bodies, and showing compassion by feeding both, in Mark vi 34, &c.: "And Jesus when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion towards them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things." Here was his compassion to their souls. And in the sequel we have an account of his compassion to their bodies, because they had been a long while having nothing to eat; he fed five thousand of them with five loaves and two fishes. And if the compassion of professing Christians towards others does not work in the same ways, it is a sign that it is no true Christian compassion.

And furthermore, it is a sign that affections are not of the right sort, if persons seem to be much affected with the bad qualities of their fellow Christians, as the coldness and lifelessness of other saints, but are in no proportion affected with their own defects and corruptions. A true Christian may be affected with the coldness and unsavoriness of other saints, and may mourn much over it: but at the same time, he is not so apt to be affected with the badness of any body's heart, as his own; this is most in his view; this he is most quicksighted to discern; this he sees most of the aggravations of, and is most ready to lament And a less degree of virtue will bring him to pity himself, and be concerned at his own calamities, than rightly to be affected with others' calamities. And if men have not attained to the less, we may determine they never attained to the greater.

And here by the way, I would observe, that it may be laid down as a general rule, that if persons pretend that they come to high attainments in religion, but have never yet arrived to the less attainments, it is a sign of a vain pretence. As if persons pretend, that they have got beyond mere morality, to live a spiritual and divine life; but really have not come to be so much as moral persons: or pretend to be greatly affected with the wickedness of their hearts, and are not affected with the palpable violations of God's commands in their practice, which is a less attainment: or if they pretend to be brought to be even willing to be damned for the glory of God, but have no forwardness to suffer a little in their estates and names, and worldly convenience, for the sake of their duty: or

pretend that they are not afraid to venture their souls upon Christ, and commit their all to God, trusting to his bare word, and the faithfulness of his promises, for their eternal welfare; but at the same time, have not confidence enough in God, to dare to trust him with a little of their estates, bestowed to pious and charitable uses; I say, when it is thus with persons, their pretences are manifestly vain. He that is in a journey, and imagines he has got far beyond such a place in his road, and never yet came to it, must be mistaken; and he is not yet arrived to the top of the hill, that never yet got half way thither. But this by the way.

The same that has been observed of the affection of love, is also to be observed of other religious affections. Those that are true, extend in some proportion to the various things that are their due and proper objects; but when they are false, they are commonly strangely disproportionate. So it is with religious desires and longings: these in the saints, are to those things that are spiritual and excellent in general, and that in some proportion to their excellency, importance or necessity, or their near concern in them; but in false longing it is often far otherwise. They will strangely run, with an impatient vehemence, after something of less importance, when other things of greater importance are neglected.—Thus for instance, some persons, from time to time, are attended with a vehement inclination, and unaccountably violent pressure, to declare to others what they experience, and to exhort others; when there is, at the same time, no inclination, in any measure equal to it, to other things, that true Christianity has as great, yea, a greater tendency to; as the pouring out the soul before God in secret, earnest prayer and praise to him, and more conformity to him, and living more to his glory, &c. We read in Scripture of "groanings that cannot be uttered, and soul breakings for the longing it hath, and longings, thirstings, and pantings," much more frequently to these latter things, than the former.

And so as to hatred and zeal; when these are from right principles, they are against sin in general, in some proportion to the degree of sinfulness: Psal. cxix. 104, "I hate every false way." So ver. 128. But a false hatred and zeal against sin, is against some particular sin only. Thus some seem to be very zealous against profaneness, and pride in apparel, who themselves are notorious for covetousness, closeness, and it may be backbiting, envy towards superiors, turbulency of spirit towards rulers, and rooted ill will to them that have injured them. False zeal is against the sins of others, while men have no zeal against their own sins. But he that has true zeal, exercises it chiefly against his own sins; though he shows also a proper zeal against prevailing and dangerous iniquity in others. And some pretend to have a great abhorrence of their own sins of heart, and cry out much of their inward corruption; and yet make light of sins in practice, and seem to commit them without much restraint or remorse; though these imply sin both in heart and life.

As there is a much greater disproportion in the exercises of false affections than of true, as to different objects, so there is also, as to different times. For although true Christians are not always alike; yea, there is very great difference, at different times, and the best have reason to be greatly ashamed of their unsteadiness; yet there is in no wise that instability and inconstancy in the hearts of those who are true virgins, "that follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth," which is in false-hearted professors. The righteous man is truly said to be one whose heart is fixed, trusting in God, Psal. cxii. 7, and to have his heart established with grace, Heb. xiii. 9, and to hold on his way, Job. xvii. 9: "The righteous shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall wax

stronger and stronger." It is spoken of as a note of the hypocrisy of the Jewish church, that they were as a swift dromedary, traversing her ways.

If therefore persons are religious only by fits and starts; if they now and then seem to be raised up to the clouds in their affections, and then suddenly fall down again, lose all, and become quite careless and carnal, and this is their manner of carrying on religion; if they appear greatly moved, and mightily engaged in religion, only in extraordinary seasons, in the time of a remarkable outpouring of the Spirit, or other uncommon dispensation of providence, or upon the real or supposed receipt of some great mercy, when they have received some extraordinary temporal mercy, or suppose that they are newly converted, or have lately had what they call a great discovery; but quickly return to such a frame, that their hearts are chiefly upon other things, and the prevailing bent of their hearts and stream of their affections, is ordinarily towards the things of this world; when they are like the children of Israel in the wilderness, who had their affections highly raised by what God had done for them at the Red Sea, and sang his praise, and soon fell a lusting after the fleshpots of Egypt; but then again, when they came to Mount Sinai, and saw the great manifestations God made of himself there, seemed to be greatly engaged again, and mightily forward to enter into covenant with God, saying, "All that the Lord hath spoken will we do, and be obedient," but then quickly made them a golden calf; I say, when it is thus with persons, it is a sign of the unsoundness of their affections.* They are like the waters in the time of a shower of rain, which, during the shower, and a little after, run like a brook, and flow abundantly; but are presently quite dry; and when another shower comes, then they will flow again. Whereas a true saint is like a stream from a living spring; which, though it may be greatly increased by a shower of rain, and diminished in time of drought, yet constantly runs: John iv. 14, "The water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water, springing up," &c., or like a tree planted by such a stream, that has a constant supply at the root, and is always green, even in time of the greatest drought: Jer. xvii. 7, 8, "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green, and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit." Many hypocrites are like comets that appear for a while with a mighty blaze; but are very unsteady and irregular in their motion (and are therefore called wandering stars, Jude 13), and their blaze soon disappears, and they appear but once in a great while. But the true saints are like the fixed stars, which, though they rise and set, and are often clouded, yet are steadfast in their orb, and may truly be said to shine with a constant light. Hypocritical affections are like a violent motion; like that of the air that is moved with winds (Jude 12), but gracious affections are more a natural motion; like the stream of a river, which, though it has many turns

* Dr. Owen (on the Spirit, Book III. Chap. ii. Sect. 18), speaking of a common work of the Spirit, says, "This work operates greatly on the affections: we have given instances, in fear, sorrow, joy and delight, about spiritual things, that are stirred up and acted thereby: but yet it comes short in two things, of a thorough work upon the affections themselves. For first, it doth not fix them. And secondly, it doth not fill them."

"There is (says Dr. Preston) a certain love, by fits, which God accepts not: when men come and offer to God great promises, like the waves of the sea, as big as mountains: oh, they think they will do much for God! But their minds change; and they become as those high waves, which at last fall level with the other waters."

Mr. Flavel, speaking of these changeable professors, says, "These professors have more of the moon than of the sun: little light, less heat, and many changes. They deceive many, yea, they deceive themselves, but cannot deceive God. They want that ballast and establishment in themselves, that would have kept them tight and steady." *Touchstone of Sincerity*, Chap. ii. Sec. 2.

hither and thither, and may meet with obstacles, and runs more freely and swiftly in some places than others; yet in the general, with a steady and constant course, tends the same way, until it gets to the ocean.

And as there is a strange unevenness and disproportion in false affections, at different times; so there often is in different places. Some are greatly affected from time to time, when in company; but have nothing that bears any manner of proportion to it in secret, in close meditation, secret prayer, and conversing with God, when alone, and separated from all the world.* A true Christian doubtless delights in religious fellowship, and Christian conversation, and finds much to affect his heart in it; but he also delights at times to retire from all mankind, to converse with God in solitary places. And this also has its peculiar advantages for fixing his heart, and engaging its affections. True religion disposes persons to be much alone in solitary places, for holy meditation and prayer. So it wrought in Isaac, Gen. xxiv. 63. And which is much more, so it wrought in Jesus Christ. How often do we read of his retiring into mountains and solitary places, for holy converse with his Father! It is difficult to conceal great affections, but yet gracious affections are of a much more silent and secret nature, than those that are counterfeit. So it is with the gracious sorrow of the saints. So it is with their sorrow for their own sins. Thus the future gracious mourning of true penitents, at the beginning of the latter day glory, is represented as being so secret, as to be hidden from the companions of their bosom, Zech. xii. 12, 13, 14: "And the land shall mourn, every family apart, the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart: the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart: the family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart: the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart: all the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart." So it is with their sorrow for the sins of others. The saints' pains and travailing for the souls of sinners are chiefly in secret places: Jer. xiii. 17, "If ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride, and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because the Lord's flock is carried away captive." So it is with gracious joys: they are hidden manna, in this respect, as well as others, Rev. ii. 17.

The Psalmist seems to speak of his sweetest comforts, as those that were to be had in secret: Psal. lxiii. 5, 6, "My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips: when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches." Christ calls forth his spouse, away from the world, into retired places, that he may give her his sweetest love: Cant. vii. 11, 12, "Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field; let us lodge in the villages: there I will give thee my loves." The most eminent divine favors that the saints obtained, that we read of in Scripture, were in their retirement. The principal manifestations that God made of himself, and his covenant mercy to Abraham, were when he was alone, apart from his numerous family; as any one will judge that carefully reads his history. Isaac received that special gift of God to him, Rebekah, who was so great a

* "The Lord is neglected secretly, yet honored openly; because there is no wind in their chambers to blow their sails; and therefore there they stand still. Hence many men keep their profession, when they lose their affection. They have by the one a name to live (and that is enough) though their hearts be dead. And hence so long as you love and commend them, so long they love you; but if not, they will forsake you. They were warm only by another's fire, and hence, having no principle of life within, soon grow dead. This is the water that turns a Pharisee's mill." *Shepard's Parable*, Part I. p. 180.

"The hypocrite (says Mr. Flavel) is not for the closet, but the synagogue, Matt. vi. 5, 6. It is not his meat and drink to retire from the clamor of the world, to enjoy God in secret." *Touchstone of Sincerity*, Chap. vii. Sect. 2.

Dr. Ames, in his Cases of Conscience, Lib. III. Chap. v., speaks of it as a thing by which sincerity may be known, "That persons be obedient in the absence, as well as in the presence of lookers on; in secret, as well, yea more, than in public:" alleging Phil. ii. 12, and Matt. vi. 6.

comfort to him, and by whom he obtained the promised seed, walking alone, meditating in the field. Jacob was retired for secret prayer, when Christ came to him, and he wrestled with him, and obtained the blessing. God revealed himself to Moses in the bush, when he was in a solitary place in the desert, in Mount Horeb, Exod. iii. at the beginning. And afterwards, when God showed him his glory, and he was admitted to the highest degree of communion with God that ever he enjoyed; he was alone, in the same mountain, and continued there forty days and forty nights, and then came down with his face shining. God came to those great prophets, Elijah and Elisha, and conversed freely with them, chiefly in their retirement. Elijah conversed alone with God at Mount Sinai, as Moses did. And when Jesus Christ had his greatest prelibation of his future glory, when he was transfigured; it was not when he was with the multitude, or with the twelve disciples, but retired into a solitary place in a mountain, with only three select disciples, charging them that they should tell no man, until he was risen from the dead. When the angel Gabriel came to the blessed virgin, and when the Holy Ghost came upon her, and the power of the Highest overshadowed her, she seems to have been alone, and to be in this matter hid from the world; her nearest and dearest earthly friend Joseph, that had betrothed her (though a just man), knew nothing of the matter. And she that first partook of the joy of Christ's resurrection, was alone with Christ at the sepulchre, John xx. And when the beloved disciple was favored with those wonderful visions of Christ and his future dispensations towards the church and the world, he was alone in the isle of Patmos. Not but that we have also instances of great privileges that the saints have received when with others; or that there is not much in Christian conversation, and social and public worship, tending greatly to refresh and rejoice the hearts of the saints. But this is all that I aim at by what has been said, to show that it is the nature of true grace, that however it loves Christian society in its place, yet it in a peculiar manner delights in retirement, and secret converse with God. So that if persons appear greatly engaged in social religion, and but little in the religion of the closet, and are often highly affected when with others, and but little moved when they have none but God and Christ to converse with, it looks very darkly upon their religion.

XI. Another great and very distinguishing difference between gracious affections and others is, that gracious affections, the higher they are raised, the more is a spiritual appetite and longing of soul after spiritual attainments increased. On the contrary, false affections rest satisfied in themselves.*

The more a true saint loves God with a gracious love, the more he desires to love him, and the more uneasy is he at his want of love to him; the more he hates sin, the more he desires to hate it, and laments that he has so much remaining love to it; the more he mourns for sin, the more he longs to mourn for sin; the more his heart is broke, the more he desires it should be broke: the more he thirsts and longs after God and holiness, the more he longs to long, and breathe out his very soul in longings after God: the kindling and raising of gracious affections is like kindling a flame; the higher it is raised, the more ardent it is; and the more it burns, the more vehemently does it tend and seek to burn So that the spiritual appetite after holiness, and an increase of holy affections, is much more lively and keen in those that are eminent in holiness, than others, and more when grace and holy affections are in their most lively exercise, than at other times. It is as much the nature of one that is spiritually new born, to thirst after growth in holiness, as it is the nature of a new born babe to thirst

* "Truly there is no work of Christ that is right (says Mr. Shepard) but it carries the soul to long for more of it." *Parable of the Ten Virgins*, Part I. p. 136.

after the mother's breast; who has the sharpest appetite, when best in health 1 Pet. ii. 2, 3, "As new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious." The most that the saints have in this world, is but a taste, a prelibation of that future glory which is their proper fulness; it is only an earnest of their future inheritance in their hearts, 2 Cor. i. 22, and v. 5, and Eph. i. 14. The most eminent saints in this state are but children, compared with their future, which is their proper state of maturity and perfection; as the apostle observes, 1 Cor. xiii. 10, 11. The greatest eminency that the saints arrive to in this world, has no tendency to satiety, or to abate their desires after more; but, on the contrary, makes them more eager to press forwards; as is evident by the apostle's words, Phil. iii. 13, 14, 15: "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the mark.—Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded."

The reasons of it are, that the more persons have of holy affections, the more they have of that spiritual taste which I have spoken of elsewhere; whereby they perceive the excellency, and relish the divine sweetness of holiness. And the more grace they have, while in this state of imperfection, the more they see their imperfection and emptiness, and distance from what ought to be: and so the more do they see their need of grace; as I showed at large before, when speaking of the nature of evangelical humiliation. And besides, grace, as long as it is imperfect, is of a growing nature, and in a growing state. And we see it to be so with all living things, that while they are in a state of imperfection, and in their growing state, their nature seeks after growth; and so much the more, as they are more healthy and prosperous. Therefore the cry of every true grace, is like that cry of true faith, Mark ix. 24: "Lord, believe, help thou my unbelief." And the greater spiritual discoveries and affections the true Christian has, the more does he become an earnest beggar for grace, and spiritual food, that he may grow; and the more earnestly does he pursue after it, in the use of proper means and endeavors; for true and gracious longings after holiness are no idle ineffectual desires.

But here some may object and say, How is this consistent with what all allow, that spiritual enjoyments are of a soul satisfying nature?

I answer, its being so, will appear to be not at all inconsistent with what has been said, if it be considered in what manner spiritual enjoyments are said to be of a soul satisfying nature. Certainly they are not so in that sense, that they are of so cloying a nature, that he who has any thing of them, though but in a very imperfect degree, desires no more. But spiritual enjoyments are of a soul satisfying nature in the following respects. 1. They in their kind and nature, are fully adapted to the nature, capacity, and need of the soul of man. So that those who find them, desire no other kind of enjoyments; they sit down fully contented with that kind of happiness which they have, desiring no change, nor inclining to wander about any more, saying, "Who will show us any good?" The soul is never cloyed, never weary; but perpetually giving up itself, with all its powers, to this happiness. But not that those who have something of this happiness, desire no more of the same. 2. They are satisfying also in this respect, that they answer the expectation of the appetite. When the appetite is high to any thing, the expectation is consequently so. Appetite to a particular object, implies expectation in its nature. This expectation is not satisfied by worldly enjoyments; the man expected to have a great accession of happiness, but he is disappointed. But it is not so with spiritual enjoyments; they fully answer and satisfy the expectation. 3. The gratification and pleasure of

spiritual enjoyments is permanent. It is not so with worldly enjoyments. They in a sense satisfy particular appetites: but the appetite, in being satisfied, is glutted, and then the pleasure is over: and as soon as that is over, the general appetite of human nature after happiness returns; but is empty, and without any thing to satisfy it. So that the glutting of a particular appetite, does but take away from, and leave empty, the general thirst of nature. 4 Spiritual good is satisfying, as there is enough in it to satisfy the soul, as to degree, if obstacles were but removed, and the enjoying faculty duly applied. There is room enough here for the soul to extend itself; here is an infinite ocean of it. If men be not satisfied here, in degree of happiness, the cause is with themselves; it is because they do not open their mouths wide enough.

But these things do not argue that a soul has no appetite excited after more of the same, that has tasted a little; or that his appetite will not increase, the more he tastes, until he comes to fulness of enjoyment: as bodies that are attracted to the globe of the earth, tend to it more strongly, the nearer they come to the attracting body, and are not at rest out of the centre. Spiritual good is of a satisfying nature; and for that very reason, the soul that tastes, and knows its nature, will thirst after it, and a fulness of it, that it may be satisfied. And the more he experiences, and the more he knows this excellent, unparalleled, exquisite, and satisfying sweetness, the more earnestly will he hunger and thirst for more, until he comes to perfection. And therefore this is the nature of spiritual affections, that the greater they be, the greater the appetite and longing is, after grace and holiness.

But with those joys, and other religious affections, that are false and counterfeit, it is otherwise. If before, there was a great desire, of some sort, after grace; as these affections rise, that desire ceases, or is abated. It may be before, while the man was under legal convictions, and much afraid of hell, he earnestly longed that he might obtain spiritual light in his understanding, and faith in Christ, and love to God: but now, when these false affections are risen, that deceive him, and make him confident that he is converted, and his state good there are no more earnest longings after light and grace; for his end is answered; he is confident that his sins are forgiven him, and that he shall go to heaven; and so he is satisfied. And especially when false affections are raised very high, they put an end to longings after grace and holiness. The man now is far from appearing to himself a poor empty creature; on the contrary, he is rich, and increased with goods, and hardly conceives of any thing more excellent than what he has already attained to.

Hence there is an end to many persons' earnestness in seeking, after they have once obtained that which they call their conversion; or at least, after they have had those high affections, that make them fully confident of it. Before, while they looked upon themselves as in a state of nature, they were engaged in seeking after God and Christ, and cried earnestly for grace, and strove in the use of means: but now they act as though they thought their work was done; they live upon their first work, or some high experiences that are past; and there is an end to their crying, and striving after God and grace. Whereas the holy principles that actuate a true saint, have a far more powerful influence to stir him up to earnestness in seeking God and holiness, than servile fear. Hence seeking God is spoken of as one of the distinguishing characters of the saints; and those that seek God is one of the names by which the godly are called in Scripture: Psal. xxiv. 6, "This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob!" Psal. lxix. 6, "Let not those that seek thee, be confounded for my sake." Ver. 32, "The humble shall see this and be glad: and

your heart shall live that seek God." And lxx. 4, "Let all those that seek thee, rejoice, and be glad in thee: and let such as love thy salvation say continually, The Lord be magnified." And the Scriptures everywhere represent the seeking, striving, and labor of a Christian, as being chiefly after his conversion, and his conversion as being but the beginning of his work. And almost all that is said in the New Testament, of men's watching, giving earnest heed to themselves, running the race that is set before them, striving, and agonizing, wrestling not with flesh and blood, but principalities and powers, fighting, putting on the whole armor of God, and standing, having done all to stand, pressing forward, reaching forth, continuing instant in prayer, crying to God day and night; I say, almost all that is said in the New Testament of these things, is spoken of, and directed to the saints. Where these things are applied to sinners' seeking conversion once, they are spoken of the saints' prosecution of the great business of their high calling ten times. But many in these days have got into a strange antiscriptural way, of having all their striving and wrestling over before they are converted; and so having an easy time of it afterwards, to sit down and enjoy their sloth and indolence; as those that now have a supply of their wants, and are become rich and full. But when the Lord "fills the hungry with good things, these rich are like to be sent away empty," Luke i. 53.

But doubtless there are some hypocrites, that have only false affections, who will think they are able to stand this trial; and will readily say, that they desire not to rest satisfied with past attainments, but to be pressing forward, they do desire more, they long after God and Christ, and desire more holiness, and do seek it. But the truth is, their desires are not properly the desires of appetite after holiness, for its own sake, or for the moral excellency and holy sweetness that is in it; but only for by-ends. They long after clearer discoveries, that they may be better satisfied about the state of their souls; or because in great discoveries self is gratified, in being made so much of by God, and so exalted above others; they long to taste the love of God (as they call it) more than to have more love to God. Or, it may be, they have a kind of forced, fancied, or made longings; because they think they must long for more grace, otherwise it will be a dark sign upon them. But such things as these are far different from the natural, and as it were necessary appetite and thirsting of the new man, after God and holiness. There is an inward burning desire that a saint has after holiness, as natural to the new creature, as vital heat is to the body. There is a holy breathing and panting after the Spirit of God, to increase holiness, as natural to a holy nature, as breathing is to a living body. And holiness or sanctification is more directly the object of it, than any manifestation of God's love and favor. This is the meat and drink that is the object of the spiritual appetite: John iv. 34, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." Where we read in Scripture of the desires, longings, and thirstings of the saints, righteousness and God's laws are much more frequently mentioned, as the object of them, than any thing else. The saints desire the sincere milk of the word, not so much to testify God's love to them, as that they may grow thereby in holiness. I have shown before, that holiness is that good which is the immediate object of a spiritual taste. But undoubtedly the same sweetness that is the chief object of a spiritual taste, is also the chief object of a spiritual appetite. Grace is the godly man's treasure: Isa. xxxii, 6, "The fear of the Lord is his treasure." Godliness is the gain that he is covetous and greedy of. 1 Tim. vi. 6. Hypocrites long for discoveries, more for the present comfort of the discovery, and the high manifestation of God's love in it, than for any sanctifying influence of it. But neither a longing after great dis-

coveries, or after great tastes of the love of God, nor longing to be in heaven, nor longing to die, are in any measure so distinguishing marks of true saints, as longing after a more holy heart, and living a more holy life.

But I am come now to the last distinguishing mark of holy affections that I shall mention.

XII. Gracious and holy affections have their exercise and fruit in Christian practice.—I mean, they have that influence and power upon him who is the subject of them, that they cause that a practice, which is universally conformed to, and directed by Christian rules, should be the practice and business of his life.

This implies three things: 1. That his behavior or practice in the world, be universally conformed to, and directed by Christian rules. 2. That he makes a business of such a holy practice above all things; that it be a business which he is chiefly engaged in, and devoted to, and pursues with highest earnestness and diligence: so that he may be said to make this practice of religion eminently his work and business. And 3. That he persists in it to the end of life: so that it may be said, not only to be his business at certain seasons, the business of Sabbath days, or certain extraordinary times, or the business of a month, or a year, or of seven years, or his business under certain circumstances; but the business of his life; it being that business which he perseveres in through all changes, and under all trials, as long as he lives.

The necessity of each of these, in all true Christians, is most clearly and fully taught in the word of God.

1. It is necessary that men should be universally obedient: 1 John iii. 3, &c., "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.—And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not; whosoever sinneth, hath not seen him, neither known him. He that doeth righteousness, is righteous even as he is righteous: he that committeth sin is of the devil." Chap. v. 18, "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not, but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." John xv. 14, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."

If one member only be corrupt, and we do not cut it off, it will carry the whole body to hell, Matt. v. 29, 30. Saul was commanded to slay all God's enemies, the Amalekites; and he slew all but Agag, and the saving him alive proved his ruin. Caleb and Joshua entered into God's promised rest, because they wholly followed the Lord, Numb. xiv. 24, and xxxii. 11, 12, Deut. i. 36, Josh. xiv. 6, 8, 9, 14. Naaman's hypocrisy appeared in that, however he seemed to be greatly affected with gratitude to God for healing his leprosy, and engaged to serve him, yet in one thing he desired to be excused. And Herod, though he feared John, and observed him, and heard him gladly, and did many things; yet was condemned, in that in one thing he would not hearken to him, even in parting with his beloved Herodias. So that it is necessary that men should part with their dearest iniquities, which are as their right hand and right eyes, sins that most easily beset them, and which they are most exposed to by their natural inclinations, evil customs, or particular circumstances, as well as others. As Joseph would not make known himself to his brethren, who had sold him, until Benjamin the beloved child of the family, that was most hardly parted with, was delivered up; no more will Christ reveal his love to us, until we part with our dearest lusts, and until we are brought to comply with the most difficult duties, and those that we have the greatest aversion to.

And it is of importance that it should be observed, that in order to a man's being truly said to be universally obedient, his obedience must not only consist in

negatives, or in universally avoiding wicked practices, consisting in sins of commission, but he must also be universal in the positives of religion. Sins of omission are as much breaches of God's commands, as sins of commission. Christ, in Matt. xxv. represents those on the left hand as being condemned and cursed to everlasting fire for sins of omission. "I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat," &c. A man, therefore, cannot be said to be universally obedient, and of a Christian conversation, only because he is no thief, nor oppressor, nor fraudulent person, nor drunkard, nor tavern haunter, nor whoremaster, nor riotter, nor night walker, nor unclean, nor profane in his language, nor slanderer, nor liar, nor furious, nor malicious, nor reviler. He is falsely said to be of a conversation that becomes the gospel, who goes thus far and no farther; but in order to this, it is necessary that he should also be of a serious, religious, devout, humble, meek, forgiving, peaceful, respectful, condescending, benevolent, merciful, charitable and beneficent walk and conversation. Without such things as these, he does not obey the laws of Christ, and laws that he and his apostles did abundantly insist on, as of the greatest importance and necessity.

2. In order to men's being true Christians, it is necessary that they prosecute the business of religion, and the service of God with great earnestness and diligence, as the work which they devote themselves to, and make the main business of their lives. All Christ's peculiar people not only do good works, but are zealous of good works, Tit. ii. 14. No man can do the service of two masters at once. They that are God's true servants do give up themselves to his service, and make it as it were their whole work, therein employing their whole hearts, and the chief of their strength: Phil. iii. 13, "This one thing I do." Christians in their effectual calling, are not called to idleness, but to labor in God's vineyard, and spend their day in doing a great and laborious service. All true Christians comply with this call (as is implied in its being an effectual call), and do the work of Christians; which is everywhere in the New Testament compared to those exercises wherein men are wont to exert their strength with the greatest earnestness, as running, wrestling, fighting. All true Christians are good and faithful soldiers of Jesus Christ, and "fight the good fight of faith;" for none but those who do so, do "ever lay hold on eternal life." Those who "fight as those that beat the air," never win the crown of victory. "They that run in a race, run all, but one wins the prize," and they that are slack and negligent in their course, do not "so run as that they may obtain." The kingdom of heaven is not to be taken but by violence. Without earnestness there is no getting along, in that narrow way that leads to life; and so no arriving at that state of glorious life and happiness which it leads to. Without earnest labor there is no ascending the steep and high hill of Zion, and so no arriving at the heavenly city on the top of it. Without a constant laboriousness there is no stemming the swift stream in which we swim, so as ever to come to that fountain of water of life that is at the head of it. There is need that we should "watch and pray always, in order to our escaping those dreadful things that are coming on the ungodly, and our being counted worthy to stand before the Son of man." There is need of our "putting on the whole armor of God, and doing all, to stand," in order to our avoiding a total overthrow, and being utterly destroyed by "the fiery darts of the devil." There is need that we should "forget the things that are behind, and be reaching forth to the things that are before, and pressing towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus our Lord," in order to our obtaining that prize. Slothfulness in the service of God in his professed servants, is as damning as open rebellion; for the slothful servant is a wicked servant, and

shall be cast into outer darkness, among God's open enemies, Matt. xxv. 26, 30. They that are slothful are not "followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." Heb. vi. 11, 12, "And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope unto the end; that ye be not slothful, but followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises." And all they who follow that cloud of witnesses that are gone before to heaven, "do lay aside every weight, and the sin that easily besets them, and do run with patience the race that is set before them," Heb. xii. 1. That true faith, by which persons rely on the righteousness of Christ, and the work that he hath done for them, and do truly feed and live upon him, is evermore accompanied with such a spirit of earnestness in the Christian work and course. Which was typified of old, by the manner of the children of Israel's feeding on the paschal lamb; who were directed to eat it, as those that were in haste, with their loins girded, their shoes on their feet, and their staff in their hand, Exod. xii. 11.

3. Every true Christian perseveres in this way of universal obedience, and diligent and earnest service of God, through all the various kinds of trials that he meets with, to the end of life. That all true saints, all those that do obtain eternal life, do thus persevere in the practice of religion, and the service of God, is a doctrine so abundantly taught in the Scripture, that particularly to rehearse all the texts which imply it would be endless; I shall content myself with referring to some in the margin.*

But that perseverance in obedience, which is chiefly insisted on in the Scripture, as a special note of the truth of grace, is the continuance of professors in the practice of their duty, and being steadfast in a holy walk, through the various trials that they meet with.

By trials here, I mean those things that occur, and that a professor meets with in his course, that do especially render his continuance in his duty and faithfulness to God, difficult to nature. These things are from time to time called in Scripture by the name of trials, or temptations (which are words of the same signification). These are of various kinds: there are many things that render persons' continuance in the way of their duty difficult, by their tendency to cherish and foment, or to stir up and provoke their lusts and corruptions. Many things make it hard to continue in the way of their duty, by their being of an alluring nature, and having a tendency to entice persons to sin, or by their tendency to take off restraints, and embolden them in iniquity. Other things are trials of the soundness and steadfastness of professors, by their tendency to make their duty appear terrible to them, and so to affright and drive them from it; such as the sufferings which their duty will expose them to; pain, ill will, contempt, and reproach, or loss of outward possessions and comforts. If persons, after they have made a profession of religion, live any considerable time in this world, which is so full of changes, and so full of evil, it cannot be otherwise than that they should meet with many trials of their sincerity and steadfastness. And besides, it is God's manner, in his providence, to bring trials on his professing friends and servants designedly, that he may manifest them, and may exhibit sufficient matter of conviction of the state which they are in, to their own consciences, and oftentimes to the world; as appears by innumerable Scriptures.

* Deut. v. 29; Deut. xxxii. 18, 19, 20; 1 Chron. xxviii. 9; Psal. lxxviii. 7, 8, 10, 11, 35, 36, 37, 41, 42, 56, &c.; Psal. cvi. 3, 12—15; Psal. cxxv. 4, 5; Prov. xxvi. 11; Isa. lxiv. 5; Jer. xvii. 13; Ezek. iii. 20, and xviii. 24, and xxxiii. 12, 13; Matth. x. 22, and xiii. 4—8, with verses 19—23, and xxv. 8, and xxiv. 12, 13, Luke ix. 62, and xii. 35, &c., and xxii. 28, and xvii. 32; John viii. 30, 31, and xv. 6, 7, 8,

True saints may be guilty of some kinds and degrees of backsliding, and may be foiled by particular temptations, and may fall into sin, yea great sins; but they never can fall away so as to grow weary of religion, and the service of God, and habitually to dislike it and neglect it, either on its own account, or on account of the difficulties that attend it; as is evident by Gal. vi. 9, Rom. ii. 7, Heb. x. 36, Isa. xliii. 22, Mal. i. 13. They can never backslide, so as to continue no longer in a way of universal obedience; or so, that it shall cease to be their manner to observe all the rules of Christianity, and do all duties required, even in the most difficult circumstances. This is abundantly manifest by the things that have been observed already. Nor can they ever fall away so as habitually to be more engaged in other things than in the business of religion; or so that it should become their way and manner to serve something else more than God; or so as statedly to cease to serve God, with such earnestness and diligence, as still to be habitually devoted and given up to the business of religion; unless those words of Christ can fall to the ground, "Ye cannot serve two masters," and those of the apostle, "He that will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God;" and unless a saint can change his God, and yet be a true saint. Nor can a true saint ever fall away so, that it shall come to this, that ordinarily there shall be no remarkable difference in his walk and behavior since his conversion, from what was before. They that are truly converted are new men, new creatures; new not only within, but without; they are sanctified throughout, in spirit, soul and body; old things are passed away, all things are become new; they have new hearts, and new eyes, new ears, new tongues, new hands, new feet; i. e., a new conversation and practice; and they walk in newness of life, and continue to do so to the end of life. And they that fall away, and cease visibly to do so, it is a sign they never were risen with Christ. And especially when men's opinion of their being converted, and so in a safe estate, is the very cause of their coming to this, it is a most evident sign of their hypocrisy. And that, whether their falling away be into their former sins, or into some new kind of wickedness, having the corruption of nature only turned into a new channel, instead of its being mortified. As when persons that think themselves converted, though they do not return to former profaneness and lewdness; yet from the high opinion they have of their experiences, graces, and privileges, gradually settle more and more in a self-righteous and spiritually proud temper of mind, and in such a manner of behavior as naturally arises therefrom. When it is thus with men, however far they may seem to be from their former evil practices, this alone is enough to condemn them, and may render their last state far worse than the first. For this seems to be the very case of the Jews of that generation that Christ speaks of, Matt. xii. 43, 44, 45, who being awakened by John the Baptist's preaching, and brought to a reformation of their former licentious courses, whereby the unclean spirit was as it were turned out, and the house swept and garnished; yet, being empty of God and of grace, became full of themselves, and were exalted in an exceeding high opinion of their own righteousness and eminent holiness, and became habituated to an answerably self-exalting behavior; so changing the sins of publicans and harlots, for those of the Pharisees; and in issue, had seven devils, worse than the first.

Thus I have explained what exercise and fruit I mean, when I say, that gracious affections have their exercise and fruit in Christian practice.

The reason why gracious affections have such a tendency and effect ap-

10, 16; Rom. ii. 7, and xi. 22; Col. i. 22, 23, Heb. iii. 6, 12, 14, and vi. 11, 12, and x. 35, &c.; James i. 25; Rev. ii. 13, 26, and ii. 10: 2 Tim. ii. 15; 2 Tim. iv. 4—8.

pears from many things that have already been observed, in the preceding parts of this discourse.

The reason of it appears from this, that gracious affections do arise from those operations and influences which are spiritual, and that the inward principle from whence they flow, is something divine, a communication of God, a participation of the divine nature, Christ living in the heart, the Holy Spirit dwelling there, in union with the faculties of the soul, as an internal vital principle, exerting his own proper nature, in the exercise of those faculties. This is sufficient to show us why true grace should have such activity, power, and efficacy. No wonder that which is divine, is powerful and effectual; for it has omnipotence on its side. If God dwells in the heart, and be vitally united to it, he will show that he is a God, by the efficacy of his operation. Christ is not in the heart of a saint, as in a sepulchre, or as a dead saviour, that does nothing; but as in his temple, and as one that is alive from the dead. For in the heart where Christ savingly is, there he lives, and exerts himself after the power of that endless life that he received at his resurrection. Thus every saint that is a subject of the benefit of Christ's sufferings, is made to know and experience the power of his resurrection. The Spirit of Christ, which is the immediate spring of grace in the heart, is all life, all power, all act: 1 Cor. ii. 4, "In demonstration of the Spirit, and of power." 1 Thess. i. 5, "Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost." 1 Cor. iv 20, "The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power." Hence saving affections, though oftentimes they do not make so great a noise and show as others, yet have in them a secret solidity, life, and strength, whereby they take hold of, and carry away the heart, leading it into a kind of captivity, 2 Cor. x. 5, gaining a full and steadfast determination of the will for God and holiness. Psal. cx. 3, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." And thus it is that holy affections have a governing power in the course of a man's life. A statue may look very much like a real man, and a beautiful man; yea, it may have, in its appearance to the eye, the resemblance of a very lively, strong, and active man; but yet an inward principle of life and strength is wanting; and therefore it does nothing, it brings nothing to pass, there is no action or operation to answer the show. False discoveries and affections do not go deep enough to reach and govern the spring of men's actions and practice. The seed in stony ground had not deepness of earth, and the root did not go deep enough to bring forth fruit. But gracious affections go to the very bottom of the heart, and take hold of the very inmost springs of life and activity.

Herein chiefly appears the power of true godliness, viz., in its being effectual in practice. And the efficacy of godliness in this respect, is what the apostle has respect to, when he speaks of the power of godliness, 2 Tim. iii. 5, as is very plain; for he there is particularly declaring, how some professors of religion would notoriously fail in the practice of it, and then in the 5th verse observes, that in being thus of an unholy practice, they deny the power of godliness, though they have the form of it. Indeed the power of godliness is exerted in the first place within the soul, in the sensible, lively exercise of gracious affections there. Yet the principal evidence of this power of godliness, is in those exercises of holy affections that are practical, and in their being practical; in conquering the will, and conquering the lusts and corruptions of men, and carrying men on in the way of holiness, through all temptations, difficulty, and opposition.

Again, the reason why gracious affections have their exercise and effect in Christian practice, appears from this (which has also been before observed), that "the first objective ground of gracious affections, is the transcendently excellent

and amiable nature of divine things, as they are in themselves, and not any conceived relation they bear to self, or self-interest." This shows why holy affections will cause men to be holy in their practice universally. What makes men partial in religion is, that they seek themselves, and not God, in their religion; and close with religion, not for its own excellent nature, but only to serve a turn. He that closes with religion only to serve a turn, will close with no more of it than he imagines serves that turn; but he that closes with religion for its own excellent and lovely nature, closes with all that has that nature: he that embraces religion for its own sake, embraces the whole of religion. This also shows why gracious affections will cause men to practise religion perseveringly, and at all times. Religion may alter greatly in process of time, as to its consistence with men's private interest, in many respects; and therefore he that complies with it only for selfish views, is liable, in change of times, to forsake it; but the excellent nature of religion, as it is in itself, is invariable; it is always the same, at all times, and through all changes; it never alters in any respect.

The reason why gracious affections issue in holy practice, also further appears from the kind of excellency of divine things, that it has been observed is the foundation of all holy affections, viz., "their moral excellency, or the beauty of their holiness." No wonder that a love to holiness, for holiness' sake, inclines persons to practise holiness, and to practise every thing that is holy. Seeing holiness is the main thing that excites, draws, and governs all gracious affections, no wonder that all such affections tend to holiness. That which men love, they desire to have and to be united to, and possessed of. That beauty which men delight in, they desire to be adorned with. Those acts which men delight in, they necessarily incline to do.

And what has been observed of that divine teaching and leading of the Spirit of God, which there is in gracious affections, shows the reason of this tendency of such affections to a universally holy practice. For, as has been observed, the Spirit of God in this his divine teaching and leading, gives the soul a natural relish of the sweetness of that which is holy, and of every thing that is holy, so far as it comes in view and excites a disrelish and disgust of every thing that is unholy.

The same also appears from what has been observed of the nature of that spiritual knowledge, which is the foundation of all holy affection, as consisting in a sense and view of that excellency in divine things, which is supreme and transcendent. For hereby these things appear above all others, worthy to be chosen and adhered to. By the sight of the transcendent glory of Christ, true Christians see him worthy to be followed; and so are powerfully drawn after him; they see him worthy that they should forsake all for him: by the sight of that superlative amiableness, they are thoroughly disposed to be subject to him, and engaged to labor with earnestness and activity in his service, and made willing to go through all difficulties for his sake. And it is the discovery of this divine excellency of Christ, that makes them constant to him: for it makes a deep impression upon their minds, that they cannot forget him; and they will follow him whithersoever he goes, and it is in vain for any to endeavor to draw them away from him.

The reason of this practical tendency and issue of gracious affections, further appears from what has been observed of such affections being "attended with a thorough conviction of the judgment of the reality and certainty of divine things." No wonder that they who were never thoroughly convinced that there is any reality in the things of religion, will never be at the labor and trouble of such an earnest, universal, and persevering practice of religion, through all difficulties,

self-denials, and sufferings in a dependence on that, which they are not convinced of. But on the other hand, they who are thoroughly convinced of the certain truth of those things, must needs be governed by them in their practice; for the things revealed in the word of God are so great, and so infinitely more important than all other things, that it is inconsistent with the human nature, that a man should fully believe the truth of them, and not be influenced by them above all things in his practice.

Again, the reason of this expression and effect of holy affections in the practice, appears from what has been observed of "a change of nature, accompanying such affections." Without a change of nature, men's practice will not be thoroughly changed. Until the tree be made good, the fruit will not be good. Men do not gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles. The swine may be washed, and appear clean for a little while, but yet, without a change of nature he will still wallow in the mire. Nature is a more powerful principle of action, than any thing that opposes it: though it may be violently restrained for a while, it will finally overcome that which restrains it: it is like the stream of a river, it may be stopped a while with a dam, but if nothing be done to dry the fountain, it will not be stopped always; it will have a course, either in its old channel, or a new one. Nature is a thing more constant and permanent, than any of those things that are the foundation of carnal men's reformation and righteousness. When a natural man denies his lust, and lives a strict, religious life, and seems humble, painful, and earnest in religion, it is not natural; it is all a force against nature; as when a stone is violently thrown upwards; but that force will be gradually spent; yet nature will remain in its full strength, and so prevails again, and the stone returns downwards. As long as corrupt nature is not mortified, but the principle left whole in a man, it is a vain thing to expect that it should not govern. But if the old nature be indeed mortified, and a new and heavenly nature infused, then may it well be expected, that men will walk in newness of life, and continue to do so to the end of their days.

The reason of this practical exercise and effect of holy affections, may also be partly seen, from what has been said of that spirit of humility which attends them. Humility is that wherein a spirit of obedience does much consist. A proud spirit is a rebellious spirit, but a humble spirit is a yieldable, subject, obediential spirit. We see among men, that the servant who is of a haughty spirit is not apt in every thing to be submissive and obedient to the will of his master; but it is otherwise with that servant who is of a lowly spirit.

And that lamblike, dovelike spirit, that has been spoken of, which accompanies all gracious affections, fulfils (as the apostle observes, Rom. xiii. 8, 9, 10, and Gal. v. 14) all the duties of the second table of the law; wherein Christian practice does very much consist, and wherein the external practice of Christianity chiefly consists.

And the reason why gracious affections are attended with that strict, universal and constant obedience which has been spoken of, further appears, from what has been observed of that tenderness of spirit, which accompanies the affections of true saints, causing in them so quick and lively a sense of pain through the presence of moral evil, and such a dread of the appearance of evil.

And one great reason why the Christian practice which flows from gracious affections, is universal, and constant, and persevering, appears from what has been observed of those affections themselves, from whence this practice flows, being universal and constant, in all kinds of holy exercises, and towards all objects, and in all circumstances, and at all seasons in a beautiful symmetry and proportion.

And much of the reason why holy affections are expressed and manifested in such an earnestness, activity, and engagedness and perseverance in holy practice, as has been spoken of, appears from what has been observed, of the spiritual appetite and longing after further attainments in religion, which evermore attends true affection, and does not decay, but increases as those affections increase.

Thus we see how the tendency of holy affections to such a Christian practice as has been explained, appears from each of those characteristics of holy affection that have been before spoken of.

And this point may be further illustrated and confirmed, if it be considered, that the holy Scriptures do abundantly place sincerity and soundness in religion, in making a full choice of God as our only Lord and portion, forsaking all for him, and in a full determination of the will for God and Christ, on counting the cost; in our heart's closing and complying with the religion of Jesus Christ, with all that belongs to it, embracing it with all its difficulties, as it were hating our dearest earthly enjoyments, and even our own lives, for Christ; giving up ourselves, with all that we have, wholly and for ever, unto Christ, without keeping back any thing, or making any reserve; or, in one word, in the great duty of self-denial for Christ; or in denying, i. e., as it were, disowning and renouncing ourselves for him, making ourselves nothing that he may be all. See the texts to this purpose referred to in the margin.* Now surely having a heart to forsake all for Christ, tends to actually forsaking all for him, so far as there is occasion, and we have the trial. A having a heart to deny ourselves for Christ, tends to a denying ourselves indeed, when Christ and self-interest stand in competition. A giving up of ourselves, with all that we have, in our hearts, without making any reserve there, tends to our behaving ourselves universally as his, as subject to his will, and devoted to his ends. Our heart's entirely closing with the religion of Jesus, with all that belongs to it, and as attended with all its difficulties, upon a deliberate counting the cost, tends to a universal closing with the same in act and deed, and actually going through all the difficulties that we meet with in the way of religion, and so holding out with patience and perseverance.

The tendency of grace in the heart to holy practice, is very direct, and the connection most natural, close, and necessary. True grace is not an unactive thing; there is nothing in heaven or earth of a more active nature; for it is life itself, and the most active kind of life, even spiritual and divine life. It is no barren thing; there is nothing in the universe that in its nature has a greater tendency to fruit. Godliness in the heart has as direct a relation to practice, as a fountain has to a stream, or as the luminous nature of the sun has to beams sent forth, or as life has to breathing, or the beating of the pulse, or any other vital act; or as a habit or principle of action has to action; for it is the very nature and notion of grace, that it is a principle of holy action or practice. Regeneration, which is that work of God in which grace is infused, has a direct relation to practice; for it is the very end of it, with a view to which the whole work is wrought; all is calculated and framed, in this mighty and manifold change wrought in the soul, so as directly to tend to this end. Eph. ii. 10, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." Yea, it is the very end of the redemption of Christ: Tit. ii. 14, "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a

* Matt. v. 29, 30; chap. vi. 24; chap. viii. 19—22; chap. iv. 18, to 22; chap. x. 37, 38, 39; chap. xiii. 44, 45, 46; chap. xvi. 24, 25, 26; chap. xviii. 8, 9; chap. xix. 21, 27, 28, 29; Luke v. 27, 28; chap. x. 42; chap. xii. 33, 34; chap. xiv. 16—20, 25—33; chap. xvi. 13; Acts iv. 34, 35, with chap v. 1—11; Rom. vi. 3—8; Gal. ii. 20; chap. vi. 14; Philip. iii. 7.

peculiar people, zealous of good works." Eph. i. 4, "According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love." Chap. ii. 10, "Created unto good works, which God hath foreordained that we should walk in them." Holy practice is as much the end of all that God does about his saints, as fruit is the end of all the husbandman does about the growth of his field or vineyard; as the matter is often represented in Scripture, Matt. iii. 10, chapter xiii. 8, 23, 30, 38, chapter xxi. 19, 33, 34, Luke xiii. 6, John xv. 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 1 Cor. iii. 9, Heb. vi. 7, 8, Isa. v. 1—8, Cant. viii. 11, 12, Isa. xxvii. 2, 3.* And therefore every thing in a true Christian is calculated to reach this end. This fruit of holy practice is what every grace, and every discovery, and every individual thing which belongs to Christian experience, has a direct tendency to.

The constant and indissoluble connection that there is between a Christian principle and profession in the true saints, and the fruit of holy practice in their lives, was typified of old in the frame of the golden candlestick in the temple. It is beyond doubt that that golden candlestick, with its seven branches and seven lamps, was a type of the church of Christ. The Holy Ghost himself has been pleased to put that matter out of doubt, by representing his church by such a golden candlestick, with seven lamps, in the fourth chapter of Zechariah, and representing the seven churches of Asia by seven golden candlesticks, in the first chapter of the Revelation. That golden candlestick in the temple was everywhere, throughout its whole frame, made with knops and flowers: Exod. xxv. 31, to the end, and chapter xxxvii. 17—24. The word translated knop, in the original, signifies apple or pomegranate. There was a knop and a flower, a knop and a flower: wherever there was a flower, there was an apple or pomegranate with it: the flower and the fruit were constantly connected, without fail. The flower contained the principle of the fruit, and a beautiful promising appearance of it; and it never was a deceitful appearance; the principle or show of fruit, had evermore real fruit attending it, or succeeding it. So it is in the church of Christ: there is the principle of fruit in grace in the heart; and there is an amiable profession, signified by the open flowers of the candlestick; and there is answerable fruit, in holy practice, constantly attending this principle and profession. Every branch of the golden candlestick, thus composed of golden apples and flowers, was crowned with a burning, shining lamp on the top of it. For it is by this means that the saints shine as lights in the world, by making a fair and good profession of religion, and having their profession evermore joined with answerable fruit in practice: agreeable to that of our Saviour, Matt. v. 15, 16, "Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." A fair and beautiful profession, and golden fruits accompanying one another, are the amiable ornaments of the true church of Christ. Therefore we find that apples and flowers were not only the ornaments of the candlestick in the temple, but of the temple itself, which is a type of the church; which the apostle tells us "is the temple of the living God." See 1 Kings vi. 18: "And the cedar of the house within was carved with

* "To profess to know much, is easy; but to bring your affections into subjection, to wrestle with lusts, to cross your wills and yourselves, upon every occasion, this is hard. The Lord looketh that in our lives we should be serviceable to him, and useful to men. That which is within, the Lord and our brethren are never the better for it: but the outward obedience, flowing thence, glorifieth God, and does good to men. The Lord will have this done. What else is the end of our planting and watering, but that the trees may be filled with sap? And what is the end of that sap, but that the trees may bring forth fruit? What careth the husbandman for leaves and barren trees?" *Dr. Preston of the Church's Carriage.*

knops, and open flowers." The ornaments and crown of the pillars, at the entrance of the temple, were of the same sort: they were lilies and pomegranates, or flowers and fruits mixed together, 1 Kings vii. 18, 19. So it is with all those that are "as pillars in the temple of God, who shall go no more out," or never be ejected as intruders; as it is with all true saints: Rev. iii. 12, "Him that overcometh, will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out."

Much the same thing seems to be signified by the ornaments on the skirt of the ephod, the garment of Aaron, the high priest; which were golden bells and pomegranates.—That these skirts of Aaron's garment represent the church, or the saints (that are as it were the garment of Christ), is manifest; for they are evidently so spoken of, Psal. cxxxiii. 1, 2: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments." That ephod of Aaron signified the same with the seamless coat of Christ our great High Priest. As Christ's coat had no seam, but was woven from the top throughout, so it was with the ephod, Exod. xxix. 22. As God took care in his providence, that Christ's coat should not be rent; so God took special care that the ephod should not be rent, Exod. xxviii. 32, and chap. xxxix. 23. The golden bells on this ephod, by their precious matter and pleasant sound, do well represent the good profession that the saints make; and the pomegranates, the fruit they bring forth. And as in the hem of the ephod, bells and pomegranates were constantly connected, as is once and again observed, there was a golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, Exod. xxviii. 34, and chap. xxxix. 26, so it is in the true saints; their good profession and their good fruit, do constantly accompany one another: the fruit they bring forth in life, evermore answers the pleasant sound of their profession.

Again, the very same thing is represented by Christ, in his description of his spouse, Cant. vii. 2: "Thy belly is like a heap of wheat, set about with lilies." Here again are beautiful flowers, and good fruit, accompanying one another. The lilies were fair and beautiful flowers, and the wheat was good fruit.

As this fruit of Christian practice is evermore found in true saints, according as they have opportunity and trial, so it is found in them only; none but true Christians do live such an obedient life, so universally devoted to their duty, and given up to the business of a Christian, as has been explained. All unsanctified men are workers of iniquity: they are of their father the devil, and the lusts of their father they will do. There is no hypocrite that will go through with the business of religion, and both begin, and finish the tour: they will not endure the trials God is wont to bring on the professors of religion, but will turn aside to their crooked ways: they will not be thoroughly faithful to Christ in their practice, and follow him whithersoever he goes. Whatever lengths they may go in religion in some instances, and though they may appear exceeding strict, and mightily engaged in the service of God for a season; yet they are servants to sin; the chains of their old taskmasters are not broken: their lusts have yet a reigning power in their hearts; and therefore to these masters they will bow down again.* Daniel xii. 10, "Many shall be purified and made white, and

* "No unregenerate man, though he go never so far, let him do never so much, but he lives in some one sin or other, secret or open, little or great. Judas went far, but he was covetous; Herod went far, but he loved his Herodias. Every dog hath his kennel; every swine hath his swill; and every wicked man his lust." *Shepard's Sincere Convert*, 1st edition, p. 96.

tried: but the wicked will do wickedly, and none of the wicked shall understand." Isa. xxvi 10, "Let favor be showed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly." Isa. xxxv. 8, "And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it. Hos. xiv. 9, "The ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein." Job. xxvii. 8, 9, 10, "What is the hope of the hypocrite? Will he delight himself in the Almighty? Will he always call upon God?" An unsanctified man may hide his sin, and may in many things, and for a season refrain from sin; but he will not be brought finally to renounce his sin, and give it a bill of divorce; sin is too dear to him, for him to be willing for that: "Wickedness is sweet in his mouth; and therefore he hides it under his tongue; he spares it, and forsakes it not; but keeps it still within his mouth," Job xx. 12, 13. Herein chiefly consists the straitness of the gate, and the narrowness of the way that leads to life; upon the account of which, carnal men will not go in thereat, viz., that it is a way of utterly denying and finally renouncing all ungodliness, and so a way of self-denial or self-renunciation.

Many natural men, under the means that are used with them, and God's strivings with them to bring them to forsake their sins, do by their sins as Pharaoh did by his pride and covetousness, which he gratified by keeping the children of Israel in bondage, when God strove with him, to bring him to let the people go. When God's hand pressed Pharaoh sore, and he was exercised with fears of God's future wrath, he entertains some thoughts of letting the people go, and promised he would do it; but from time to time he broke his promises, when he saw there was respite. When God filled Egypt with thunder and lightning, and the fire ran along the ground, then Pharaoh is brought to confess his sin with seeming humility, and to have a great resolution to let the people go. Exod. ix. 27, 28, "And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time: the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked: entreat the Lord (for it is enough) that there be no more mighty thunderings and hail; and I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer." So sinners are sometimes, by thunders and lightnings and great terrors of the law, brought to a seeming work of humiliation, and to appearance to part with their sins; but are no more thoroughly brought to a disposition to dismiss them, than Pharaoh was to let the people go. Pharaoh, in the struggle that was between his conscience and his lusts, was for contriving that God might be served, and he enjoy his lusts that were gratified by the slavery of the people. Moses insisted that Israel's God should be served and sacrificed to: Pharaoh was willing to consent to that; but would have it done without his parting with the people: "Go sacrifice to your God in the land," says he, Exod. viii. 25. So, many sinners are for contriving to serve God, and enjoy their lusts too. Moses objected against complying with Pharaoh's proposal, that serving God, and yet continuing in Egypt under their taskmasters, did not agree together, and were inconsistent one with another (there is no serving God, and continuing slaves to such enemies of God at the same time). After this Pharaoh consented to let the people go, provided they would not go far away: he was not willing to part with them finally, and therefore would have them within reach. So do many hypocrites with respect to their sins.—Afterwards Pharaoh consented to let the men go, if they would leave the women and children, Exod. x. 8, 9, 10 And then after that, when God's hand was yet harder upon him, he consented that they should go, even women and children, as well as men, provided they would leave their cattle behind! But he was not willing to let them go, and all that

they had, Exod. x. 24. So it oftentimes is with sinners; they are willing to part with some of their sins, but not all; they are brought to part with the more gross acts of sin, but not to part with their lusts, in lesser indulgencies of them. Whereas we must part with all our sins, little and great; and all that belongs to them, men, women, children, and cattle; they must be let go, with "their young, and with their old, with their sons, and with their daughters, with their flocks, and with their herds, there must not be a hoof left behind;" as Moses told Pharaoh, with respect to the children of Israel. At last, when it came to extremity, Pharaoh consented to let the people all go, and all that they had; but he was not steadfastly of that mind, he soon repented and pursued after them again, and the reason was, that those lusts of pride and covetousness, that were gratified by Pharaoh's dominion over the people, and the gains of their service, were never really mortified in him, but only violently restrained. And thus, being guilty of backsliding, after his seeming compliance with God's commands, he was destroyed without remedy. Thus there may be a forced parting with ways of disobedience to the commands of God, that may seem to be universal, as to what appears for a little season; but because it is a mere force, without the mortification of the inward principle of sin, they will not persevere in it; but will return as the dog to his vomit; and so bring on themselves dreadful and remediless destruction. There were many false disciples in Christ's time, that followed him for a while; but none of them followed him to the end; but some on one occasion, and some on another, went back and walked no more with him.*

From what has been said, it is manifest, that Christian practice, or a holy life, is a great and distinguishing sign of true and saving grace. But I may go farther, and assert, that it is the chief of all the signs of grace, both as an evidence of the sincerity of professors unto others, and also to their own consciences.

But then it is necessary that this be rightly taken, and that it be well understood and observed, in what sense and manner Christian practice is the greatest sign of grace. Therefore to set this matter in a clear light, I will endeavor particularly and distinctly to prove, that Christian practice is the principal sign by which Christians are to judge, both of their own and others' sincerity of godliness; withal observing some things that are needful to be particularly noted, in order to a right understanding of this matter.

1. I shall consider Christian practice and holy life, as a manifestation and sign of the sincerity of a professing Christian, to the eye of his neighbors and brethren.

And that this is the chief sign of grace in this respect, is very evident from the word of God. Christ, who knew best how to give us rules to judge of others, has repeated it and inculcated it, that we should know them by their fruits: Matt. vii. 16, "Ye shall know them by their fruits." And then, after arguing the point, and giving clear reasons why it must needs be, that men's fruits

* "The counterfeit and common grace of foolish virgins, after some time of glorious profession, wilt certainly go out and be quite spent. It consumes in the using, and shining, and burning.—Men that have been most forward, decay: their gifts decay, life decays. It is so, after some time of profession: for at first, it rather grows than decays and withers; but afterwards they have enough of it, it withers and dies. The Spirit of God comes upon many hypocrites, in abundant and plentiful measure of awakening grace: it comes upon them, as it did upon Balaam, and as it is in overflowing waters, which spread far, and grow very deep, and fill many empty places. Though it doth come upon them so, yet it doth never rest within, so as to dwell there, to take up an eternal mansion for himself.—Hence it doth decay by little and little, until at last it is quite gone. As ponds filled with rain water, which comes upon them; not spring water, that riseth up within them; it dries up by little and little, until quite dry." *Shepard's Parable*, Part II. p. 58, 59.

must be the chief evidence of what sort they are, in the following verses, he closes by repeating the assertion, verse 20, "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." Again, chap. xii. 33, "Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt." As much as to say, it is a very absurd thing, for any to suppose that the tree is good and yet the fruit bad, that the tree is of one sort, and the fruit of another; for the proper evidence of the nature of the tree is its fruit. Nothing else can be intended by that last clause in the verse, "For the tree is known by its fruit," than that the tree is chiefly known by its fruit, that this is the main and most proper diagnostic by which one tree is distinguished from another. So Luke vi. 44, "Every tree is known by his own fruit." Christ nowhere says, Ye shall know the tree by its leaves or flowers, or ye shall know men by their talk, or ye shall know them by the good story they tell of their experiences, or ye shall know them by the manner and air of their speaking, and emphasis and pathos of expression, or by their speaking feelingly, or by making a very great show by abundance of talk, or by many tears and affectionate expressions, or by the affections ye feel in your hearts towards them; but by their fruits shall ye know them; the tree is known by its fruit; every tree is known by its own fruit. And as this is the evidence that Christ has directed us mainly to look at in others, in judging of them, so it is the evidence that Christ has mainly directed us to give to others, whereby they may judge of us: Matt. v. 16, "Let your light so shine before men, that others seeing your good works, may glorify your Father which is in heaven." Here Christ directs us to manifest our godliness to others. Godliness is as it were a light that shines in the soul. Christ directs that this light not only shine within, but that it should shine out before men, that they may see it. But which way shall this be? It is by our good works. Christ doth not say, that others hearing your good works, your good story, or your pathetical expressions; but "that others, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father which is in heaven." Doubtless, when Christ gives us a rule how to make our light shine, that others may have evidence of it, his rule is the best that is to be found. And the apostles do mention Christian practice as the principal ground of their esteem of persons as true Christians. As the Apostle Paul, in the 6th chapter of Hebrews. There the apostle, in the beginning of the chapter, speaks of them that have great common illuminations, that have "been enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, that afterwards fall away, and are like barren ground, that is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned;" and then immediately adds in the 9th verse (expressing his charity for the Christian Hebrews, as having that saving grace, which is better then all these common illuminations), "but beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak." And then, in the next verse, he tells them what was the reason he had such good thoughts of them: he does not say, that it was because they had given him a good account of a work of God upon their souls, and talked very experimentally; but it was their work and labor of love; "for God is not unrighteous, to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have showed towards his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister." And the same apostle speaks of a faithful serving of God in practice, as the proper proof to others of men's loving Christ above all, and preferring his honor to their private interest: Phil. ii. 21, 22, "For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's; but ye know the proof of him, that as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the

gospel." So the Apostle John expresses the same as the ground of his good opinion of Gaius, 3 John 3—6, "For I rejoiced greatly when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee." But how did the brethren testify of the truth that was in Gaius? And how did the apostle judge of the truth that was in him? It was not because they testified that he had given them a good account of the steps of his experiences, and talked like one that felt what he said, and had the very language of a Christian: but they testified that he walked in the truth; as it follows, "even as thou walkest in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in the truth. Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren and to strangers; which have borne witness of thy charity before the church." Thus the apostle explains what the brethren had borne witness of, when they came and testified of his walking in the truth. And the apostle seems in this same place, to give it as a rule to Gaius how he should judge of others; in verse 10, he mentions one Diotrephes, that did not carry himself well, and led away others after him; and then in the 11th verse, he directs Gaius to beware of such, and not to follow them; and gives him a rule whereby he may know them, exactly agreeable to that rule Christ had given before, "by their fruits ye shall know them;" says the apostle, "beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good, is of God; but he that doeth evil hath not seen God." And I would further observe, that the Apostle James, expressly comparing that way of showing others our faith and Christianity by our practice or works, with other ways of showing our faith without works, or not by works, does plainly and abundantly prefer the former: James ii. 18, "Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works; show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works." A manifestation of our faith without works, or in a way diverse from works, is a manifestation of it in words, whereby a man professes faith. As the apostle says, verse 14, "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith?" Therefore here are two ways of manifesting to our neighbor what is in our hearts; one by what we say, and the other by what we do. But the apostle abundantly prefers the latter as the best evidence. Now certainly all accounts we give of ourselves in words, our saying that we have faith, and that we are converted, and telling the manner how we came to have faith, and the steps by which it was wrought, and the discoveries and experiences that accompany it, are still but manifesting our faith by what we say; it is but showing our faith by our words; which the apostle speaks of as falling vastly short of manifesting of it by what we do, and showing our faith by our works.

And as the Scripture plainly teaches, that practice is the best evidence of the sincerity of professing Christians; so reason teaches the same thing. Reason shows, that men's deeds are better and more faithful interpreters of their minds, than their words. The common sense of all mankind, through all ages and nations, teaches them to judge of men's hearts chiefly by their practice, in other matters; as, whether a man be a loyal subject, a true lover, a dutiful child, or a faithful servant. If a man profess a great deal of love and friendship to another, reason teaches all men, that such a profession is not so great an evidence of his being a real and hearty friend, as his appearing a friend in deeds; being faithful and constant to his friend in prosperity and adversity, ready to lay out himself, and deny himself, and suffer in his personal interest, to do him a kindness. A wise man will trust to such evidences of the sincerity of friendship, further than a thousand earnest professions and solemn declarations, and most affectionate expressions of friendship in words. And there is equal reason

why practice should also be looked upon as the best evidence of friendship towards Christ. Reason says the same that Christ said, in John xiv. 21, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." Thus if we see a man, who in the course of his life seems to follow and imitate Christ, and greatly to exert and deny himself for the honor of Christ, and to promote his kingdom and interest in the world; reason teaches, that this is an evidence of love to Christ, more to be depended on, than if a man only says he has love to Christ, and tells of the inward experiences he has had of love to him, what strong love he felt, and how his heart was drawn out in love at such and such a time, when it may be there appears but little imitation of Christ in his behavior, and he seems backward to do any great matter for him, or to put himself out of his way for the promoting of his kingdom, but seems to be apt to excuse himself whenever he is called to deny himself for Christ. So if a man, in declaring his experiences, tells how he found his heart weaned from the world, and saw the vanity of it, so that all looked as nothing to him, at such and such times, and professes that he gives up all to God, and calls heaven and earth to witness to it; but yet in his practice is violent in pursuing the world, and what he gets he keeps close, is exceeding loth to part with much of it to charitable and pious uses, it comes from him almost like his heart's blood. But there is another professing Christian, that says not a great deal, yet in his behavior appears ready at all times to forsake the world, whenever it stands in the way of his duty, and is free to part with it at any time to promote religion and the good of his fellow creatures. Reason teaches, that the latter gives far the most credible manifestation of a heart weaned from the world. And if a man appears to walk humbly before God and men, and to be of a conversation that savors of a broken heart, appearing patient and resigned to God under affliction, and meek in his behavior amongst men; this is a better evidence of humiliation, than if a person only tells how great a sense he had of his own unworthiness, how he was brought to lie in the dust, and was quite emptied of himself, and saw himself nothing and all over filthy and abominable, &c. &c., but yet acts as if he looked upon himself one of the first and best of saints, and by just right the head of all the Christians in the town, and is assuming, self-willed, and impatient of the least contradiction or opposition; we may be assured in such a case, that a man's practice comes from a lower place in his heart than his profession. So (to mention no more instances) if a professor of Christianity manifests in his behavior a pitiful tender spirit towards others in calamity, ready to bear their burdens with them, willing to spend his substance for them, and to suffer many inconveniences in his worldly interest to promote the good of others' souls and bodies; is not this a more credible manifestation of a spirit of love to men, than only a man's telling what love he felt to others at certain times, how he pitied their souls, how his soul was in travail for them, and how he felt hearty love and pity to his enemies; when in his behavior he seems to be of a very selfish spirit, close and niggardly, all for himself, and none for his neighbors, and perhaps envious and contentious? Persons in a pang of affection may think they have a willingness of heart for great things, to do much and to suffer much, and so may profess it very earnestly and confidently, when really their hearts are far from it. Thus many in their affectionate pangs, have thought themselves willing to be damned eternally for the glory of God. Passing affections easily produce words; and words are cheap; and godliness is more easily feigned in words than in actions. Christian practice is a costly, laborious thing. The self-denial that is required of Christians, and the narrowness of the way that leads to life, does not consist in words, but in practice. Hypocrites may much more easily be brought to talk like saints, than to act like saints.

Thus it is plain, that Christian practice is the best sign or manifestation of the true godliness of a professing Christian, to the eye of his neighbors.

But then the following things should be well observed, that this matter may be rightly understood.

First, it must be observed, that when the Scripture speaks of Christian practice, as the best evidence to others, of sincerity and truth of grace, a profession of Christianity is not excluded, but supposed. The rules mentioned, were rules given to the followers of Christ, to guide them in their thoughts of professing Christians, and those that offered themselves as some of their society, whereby they might judge of the truth of their pretences, and the sincerity of the profession they made; and not for the trial of Heathens, or those that made no pretence to Christianity, and that Christians had nothing to do with. This is as plain as is possible in that great rule which Christ gives in the 7th of Matthew, "By their fruits ye shall know them." He there gives a rule how to judge of those that professed to be Christians, yea, that made a very high profession, false prophets, "who came in sheep's clothing," as ver. 15. So it is also with that of the Apostle James, chap ii. 18, "Show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works." It is evident, that both these sorts of persons, offering to give these diverse evidences of their faith, are professors of faith: this is implied in their offering each of them to give evidences of the faith they professed. And it is evident by the preceding verses, that the apostle is speaking of professors of faith in Jesus Christ. So it is very plain, that the Apostle John, in those passages that have been observed in his third epistle, is speaking of professing Christians. Though in these rules, the Christian practice of professors be spoken of as the greatest and most distinguishing sign of their sincerity in their profession, much more evidential than their profession itself; yet a profession of Christianity is plainly presupposed: it is not the main thing in the evidence, nor any thing distinguishing in it; yet it is a thing requisite and necessary in it. As the having an animal body, is not any thing distinguishing of a man, from other creatures, and is not the main thing in the evidence of human nature, yet it is a thing requisite and necessary in the evidence. So that if any man should say plainly that he was not a Christian, and did not believe that Jesus was the Son of God, or a person sent of God; these rules of Christ and his apostles do not at all oblige us to look upon him as a sincere Christian, let his visible practice and virtues be what they will. And not only do these rules take no place with respect to a man that explicitly denies Christianity, and is a professed Deist, Jew, Heathen, or open Infidel; but also with respect to a man that only forbears to make a profession of Christianity; because these rules were given us to to judge of professing Christians only: fruits must be joined with open flowers; bells and pomegranates go together.

But here will naturally arise this inquiry, viz., When may a man be said to profess Christianity, or what profession may properly be called a profession of Christianity?

I answer, in two things.

1. In order to a man's being properly said to make a profession of Christianity, there must undoubtedly be a profession of all that is necessary to his being a Christian, or of so much as belongs to the essence of Christianity. Whatsoever is essential in Christianity itself, the profession of that is essential in the profession of Christianity. The profession must be of the thing professed. For a man to profess Christianity, is for him to declare that he has it. And therefore so much as belongs to a thing, so as to be necessary in order to its being truly denominated that thing; so much is essential to the declaration

of that thing, in order to its being truly denominated a declaration of that thing. If we take only a part of Christianity, and leave out a part that is essential to it, what we take is not Christianity; because something that is of the essence of it is wanting. So if we profess only a part, and leave out a part that is essential, that which we profess is not Christianity. Thus, in order to a profession of Christianity, we must profess that we believe that Jesus is the Messiah; for this reason, because such a belief is essential to Christianity. And so we must profess, either expressly or implicitly, that Jesus satisfied for our sins, and other essential doctrines of the gospel, because a belief of these things also is essential to Christianity. But there are other things as essential to religion, as an orthodox belief; which it is therefore as necessary that we should profess, in order to our being truly said to profess Christianity. Thus it is essential to Christianity that we repent of our sins, that we be convinced of our own sinfulness, and that we are sensible we have justly exposed ourselves to God's wrath, and that our hearts do renounce all sin, and that we do with our whole hearts embrace Christ as our only Saviour; and that we love him above all, and are willing for his sake to forsake all, and that we do give up ourselves to be entirely and forever his, &c. Such things as these do as much belong to the essence of Christianity, as the belief of any of the doctrines of the gospel: and therefore the profession of them does as much belong to a Christian profession. Not that in order to a being professing Christians, it is necessary that there should be an explicit profession of every individual thing that belongs to Christian grace or virtue: but certainly, there must be a profession, either express or implicit, of what is of the essence of religion. And as to those things that Christians should express in their profession, we ought to be guided by the precepts of God's word, or by Scripture examples of public professions of religion, God's people have made from time to time. Thus they ought to profess their repentance of sin: as of old, when persons were initiated as professors, they came confessing their sins, manifesting their humiliation for sin, Matt. iii. 6. And the baptism they were baptized with, was called the baptism of repentance, Mark i. 4. And John, when he had baptized them, exhorted them to bring forth fruits meet for repentance, Matt. iii. 8, i. e., agreeable to that repentance which they had professed; encouraging them, that if they did so, they should escape the wrath to come, and be gathered as wheat into God's garner, Matt. iii. 7, 8, 9, 10, 12. So the Apostle Peter says to the Jews, Acts ii. 38, "Repent, and be baptized;" which shows, that repentance is a qualification that must be visible in order to baptism; and therefore ought to be publicly professed. So when the Jews that returned from captivity, entered publicly into covenant, it was with confession, or public confession of repentance of their sins, Neh. ix. 2. This profession of repentance should include or imply a profession of conviction, that God would be just in our damnation: see Neh. ix. 33, together with ver. 35, and the beginning of the next chapter. They should profess their faith in Jesus Christ, and that they embrace Christ, and rely upon him as their Saviour, with their whole hearts, and that they do joyfully entertain the gospel of Christ. Thus Philip, in order to baptizing the eunuch, required that he should profess that he believed with all his heart: and they that were received as visible Christians, at that great outpouring of the Spirit, which began at the day of Pentecost, appeared gladly to receive the gospel: Acts ii. 41, "Then they that gladly received the word, were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." They should profess that they rely on Christ's righteousness only, and strength; and that they are devoted to him, as their only Lord and Saviour, and that they rejoice in him as their only righteousness and portion.

It is foretold, that all nations shall be brought publicly to make this profession, Isa. xlv. 22, to the end: "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. Surely, shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength; even to him shall men come, and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed. In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory." They should profess to give up themselves entirely to Christ, and to God through him; as the children of Israel, when they publicly recognised their covenant with God: Deut. xxvi. 17, "Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice." They ought to profess a willingness of heart to embrace religion with all its difficulties, and to walk in a way of obedience to God universally and perseveringly, Exod. xix. 8, and xxiv. 3, 7, Deut. xxvi. 16, 17, 18, 2 Kings xxiii. 3, Neh. x. 28, 29, Psal. cxix. 57, 106. They ought to profess, that all their hearts and souls are in these engagements to be the Lord's and forever to serve him, 2 Chron. xv. 12, 13, 14. God's people swearing to God, and swearing by his name, or to his name, as it might be rendered (by which seems to be signified their solemnly giving up themselves to him in covenant, and vowing to receive him as their God, and to be entirely his, to obey and serve him), is spoken of as a duty to be performed by all God's visible Israel, Deut. vi. 13, and x. 20, Psal. lxiii. 11, Isa. xix. 18, chap. xiv. 23, 24, compared with Rom. xiv. 11, and Phil. ii. 10, 11, Isa. xlviii. 1, 2, and lxv. 15, 16, Jer. iv. 2, and v. 7, and xii. 16, Hos. iv. 15, and x. 4. Therefore, in order to persons being entitled to full esteem and charity, with their neighbors, as being sincere professors of Christianity; by those forementioned rules of Christ and his apostles, there must be a visibly holy life, with a profession, either expressing, or plainly implying such things as those which have been now mentioned. We are to know them by their fruits, that is, we are by their fruits to know whether they be what they profess to be; not that we are to know by their fruits, that they have something in them, they do not so much as pretend to.

And moreover,

2. That profession of these things, which is properly called a Christian profession, and which must be joined with Christian practice, in order to persons being entitled to the benefit of those rules, must be made (as to what appears) understandingly: that is, they must be persons that appear to have been so far instructed in the principles of religion, as to be in an ordinary capacity to understand the proper import of what is expressed in their profession. For sounds are no significations or declarations of any thing, any further than men understand the meaning of their own sounds.

But in order to persons making a proper profession of Christianity, such as the Scripture directs to and such as the followers of Christ should require, in order to the acceptance of the professors with full charity, as of their society; it is not necessary they should give an account of the particular steps and method by which the Holy Spirit, sensibly to them, wrought and brought about those great essential things of Christianity in their hearts. There is no footstep in the Scripture of any such way of the apostles, or primitive ministers and Christians requiring any such relation, in order to their receiving and treating others as their Christian brethren, to all intents and purposes, or of their first examining them, concerning the particular method and order of their experiences. They required of them a profession of the things wrought; but no account of the

manner of working was required of them. Nor is there the least shadow in the Scripture of any such custom in the church of God from Adam to the death of the Apostle John.

I am far from saying, that it is not requisite that persons should give any sort of account of their experiences to their brethren. For persons to profess those things wherein the essence of Christianity lies, is the same thing as to profess that they experience those things. Thus for persons solemnly to profess, that, in a full conviction of their own utter sinfulness, misery, and impotence, and totally undone state as in themselves, and their just desert of God's utter rejection and eternal wrath, and the utter insufficiency of their own righteousness, or any thing in them, to satisfy divine justice, or recommend them to God's favor, they do entirely depend on the Lord Jesus Christ, and his satisfaction and righteousness; that they do with all their hearts believe the truth of the gospel of Christ; and that in a full conviction of his sufficiency and perfect excellency as a Saviour, as exhibited in the gospel, they do with their whole souls cleave to him, and acquiesce in him, as the refuge and rest of their souls, and fountain of their comfort; that they repent of their sins, and utterly renounce all sin, and give up themselves wholly to Christ, willingly subjecting themselves to him as their King; that they give him their hearts and their whole man; and are willing and resolved to have God for their whole and everlasting portion; and in a dependence on his promises of a future eternal enjoyment of him in heaven, to renounce all the enjoyments of this vain world, selling all for this great treasure and future inheritance, and to comply with every command of God, even the most difficult and self-denying, and devote their whole lives to God's service; and that in forgiveness of those that have injured them, and a general benevolence to mankind, their hearts are united to the people of Jesus Christ as their people, to cleave to them and love them as their brethren, and worship and serve God, and follow Christ in union and fellowship with them, being willing and resolved to perform all those duties that belong to them, as members of the same family of God and mystical body of Christ: I say, for persons solemnly to profess such things as these, as in the presence of God, is the same thing as to profess that they are conscious to, or do experience such things in their hearts.

Nor is it what I suppose, that persons giving an account of their experience of particular exercises of grace, with the times and circumstances, gives no advantage to others in forming a judgment of their state; or that persons may not fitly be inquired of concerning these in some cases, especially cases of great importance, where all possible satisfaction concerning persons' piety is especially to be desired and sought after, as in the case of ordination or approbation of a minister. It may give advantage in forming a judgment, in several respects; and among others, in this, that hereby we may be better satisfied, that the professor speaks honestly and understandingly, in what he professes; and that he does not make the profession in mere formality.

In order to a profession of Christianity being accepted to any purpose, there ought to be good reason, from the circumstances of the profession, to think, that the professor does not make such a profession out of a mere customary compliance with a prescribed form, using words without any distinct meaning, or in a very lax and ambiguous manner, as confessions of faith are often subscribed; but that the professor understandingly and honestly signifies what he is conscious of in his own heart; otherwise his profession can be of no significance, and no more to be regarded than the sound of things without life. But indeed (whatever advantage an account of particular exercises may give in

judging of this) it must be owned, that the professor having been previously thoroughly instructed by his teachers, and given good proof of his sufficient knowledge, together with a practice agreeable to his profession, is the best evidence of this.

Nor do I suppose, but that, if a person that is inquired of about particular passages, times, and circumstances of his Christian experience, among other things, seems to be able to give a distinct account of the manner of his first conversion, in such a method as has been frequently observable in true conversion, so that things seem sensibly and distinctly to follow one another, in the order of time, according to the order of nature; it is an illustrating circumstance, that among other things adds lustre to the evidence he gives his brethren of the truth of his experiences.

But the thing that I speak of as unscriptural, is the insisting on a particular account of the distinct method and steps, wherein the Spirit of God did sensibly proceed, in first bringing the soul into a state of salvation, as a thing requisite in order to receiving a professor into full charity as a real Christian; or so, as for the want of such relation, to disregard other things in the evidence persons give to their neighbors of their Christianity, that are vastly more important and essential.

Secondly, That we may rightly understand how Christian practice is the greatest evidence that others can have of the sincerity of a professing Christian, it is needful that what was said before, showing what Christian practice is, should be borne in mind; and that it should be considered how far this may be visible to others. Merely that a professor of Christianity is what is commonly called an honest man, and a moral man (i. e., we have no special transgression or iniquity to charge him with, that might bring a blot on his character), is no great evidence of the sincerity of his profession. This is not making his light shine before men. This is not that work and labor of love showed towards Christ's name, which gave the apostle such persuasion of the sincerity of the professing Hebrews, Heb. vi. 9, 10. It may be so, that we may see nothing in a man, but that he may be a good man; there may appear nothing in his life and conversation inconsistent with his being godly, and yet neither may there be any great positive evidence that he is so. But there may be great positive appearance of holiness in men's visible behavior. Their life may appear to be a life of the service of God: they may appear to follow the example of Jesus Christ, and come up in a great measure to those excellent rules in the 5th, 6th, and 7th chapters of Matthew, and 12th of Romans, and many other parts of the New Testament: there may be a great appearance of their being universal in their obedience to Christ's commands and the rules of the gospel. They may appear to be universal in the performance of the duties of the first table, manifesting the fear and love of God; and also universal in fulfilling rules of love to men, love to saints, and love to enemies: rules of meekness and forgiveness, rules of mercy and charity, and looking not only at our own things but also at the things of others; rules of doing good to men's souls and bodies, to particular persons and to the public; rules of temperance and mortification, and of a humble conversation; rules of bridling the tongue, and improving it to glorify God and bless men, showing that in their tongues is the law of kindness. They may appear to walk as Christians, in all places, and at all seasons, in the house of God, and in their families, and among their neighbors, on Sabbath days and every day, in business and in conversation, towards friends and enemies, towards superiors, inferiors, and equals. Persons in their visible walk may appear to be very earnestly engaged in the service of God and mankind, much to labor

and lay out themselves in this work of a Christian, and to be very constant and steadfast in it, under all circumstances and temptations. There may be great manifestations of a spirit to deny themselves, and suffer for God and Christ, and the interest of religion, and the benefit of their brethren. There may be great appearances in a man's walk, of a disposition to forsake any thing, rather than to forsake Christ, and to make every thing give place to his honor. There may be great manifestations in a man's behavior of such religion as this, being his element, and of his placing the delight and happiness of his life in it; and his conversation may be such, that he may carry with him a sweet odor of Christian graces and heavenly dispositions, wherever he goes. And when it is thus in the professors of Christianity, here is an evidence to others of their sincerity in their profession, to which all other manifestations are not worthy to be compared.

There is doubtless a great variety in the degrees of evidence that professors do exhibit of their sincerity, in their life and practice; as there is a variety in the fairness and clearness of accounts persons give of the manner and method of their experiences: but undoubtedly such a manifestation as has been described, of a Christian spirit in practice, is vastly beyond the fairest and brightest story of particular steps and passages of experience that ever was told. And in general, a manifestation of the sincerity of a Christian profession in practice, is far better than a relation of experiences. But yet,

Thirdly, It must be noted, agreeable to what was formerly observed, that no external manifestations and outward appearances whatsoever, that are visible to the world, are infallible evidences of grace. These manifestations that have been mentioned, are the best that mankind can have; and they are such as do oblige Christians entirely to embrace professors as saints, and love them and rejoice in them as the children of God, and are sufficient to give them as great satisfaction concerning them, as ever is needful to guide them in their conduct, or for any purpose that needs to be answered in this world. But nothing that appears to them in their neighbor, can be sufficient to beget an absolute certainty concerning the state of his soul: for they see not his heart, nor can they see all his external behavior; for much of it is in secret, and hid from the eye of the world; and it is impossible certainly to determine how far a man may go in many external appearances and imitations of grace, from other principles. Though undoubtedly, if others could see so much of what belongs to men's practice, as their own consciences may see of it, it might be an infallible evidence of their state, as will appear from what follows.

Having thus considered Christian practice as the best evidence of the sincerity of professors to others, I now proceed,

2. To observe, that the Scripture also speaks of Christian practice as a distinguishing and sure evidence of grace to persons' own consciences. This is very plain in 1 John ii. 3: "Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments." And the testimony of our consciences, with respect to our good deeds, is spoken of as that which may give us assurance of our own godliness, 1 John iii. 18, 19: "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him." And the Apostle Paul, in Heb. vi., speaks of the work and labor of love, of the Christian Hebrews, as that which both gave him a persuasion that they had something above the highest common illuminations, and also as that evidence which tended to give them the highest assurance of hope concerning themselves, verse 9, &c.: "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation,

though we thus speak. For God is not unrighteous, to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to his saints, and do minister. And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope unto the end." So the apostle directs the Galatians to examine their behavior or practice, that they might have rejoicing in themselves in their own happy state, Gal. vi. 4: "Let every man prove his own work, so shall he have rejoicing in himself, and not in another." And the psalmist says, Psal. cxix. 6, "Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments;" i. e., then I shall be bold, and assured, and steadfast in my hope. And in that of our Saviour, Matt. vii. 19, 20: "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." Though Christ gives this, firstly, as a rule by which we should judge of others, yet in the words that next follow he plainly shows, that he intends it also as a rule by which we should judge ourselves: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, &c.—— And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock.—— And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand." I shall have occasion to mention other texts to show the same thing, hereafter.

But for the greater clearness in this matter, I would, first, show how Christian practice, doing good works, or keeping Christ's commandments, is to be taken, when the Scripture represents it as a sure sign to our own consciences, that we are real Christians. And secondly, will prove, that this is the chief of all evidences that men can have of their own sincere godliness.

First, I would show how Christian practice, or keeping Christ's commandments, is to be taken, when the Scripture represents it as a sure evidence to our own consciences, that we are sincere Christians.

And here I would observe, that we cannot reasonably suppose, that when the Scripture in this case speaks of good works, good fruit, and keeping Christ's commandments, it has respect merely to what is external, or the motion and action of the body without including any thing else, having no respect to any aim or intention of the agent, or any act of his understanding or will. For consider men's actions so, and they are no more good works or acts of obedience, than the regular motions of a clock; nor are they considered as the actions of the man, nor any human actions at all. The actions of the body, taken thus, are neither acts of obedience nor disobedience, any more than the motions of the body in a convulsion. But the obedience and fruit that is spoken of, is the obedience and fruit of the man; and therefore not only the acts of the body, but the obedience of the soul, consisting in the acts and practice of the soul. Not that I suppose, that when the Scripture speaks, in this case, of gracious works, and fruit and practice, that in these expressions are included all inward piety and holiness of heart, both principle and exercise, both spirit and practice: because then, in these things being given as signs of a gracious principle in the heart, the same thing would be given as a sign of itself, and there would be no distinction between root and fruit. But only the gracious exercise, and holy act of the soul is meant, and given as the sign of the holy principle and good estate. Neither is every kind of inward exercise of grace meant; but the practical exercise, that exercise of the soul, and exertion of inward holiness, which

there is in an obediential act; or that exertion of the mind, and act of grace, which issues and terminates in what they call the imperate acts of the will; in which something is directed and commanded by the soul to be done, and brought to pass in practice.

Here, for a clearer understanding, I would observe, that there are two kinds of exercises of grace. 1. There are those that some call immanent acts; that is, those exercises of grace that remain within the soul, that begin and are terminated there, without any immediate relation to any thing to be done outwardly, or to be brought to pass in practice. Such are the exercises of grace, which the saints often have in contemplation; when the exercise that is in the heart, does not directly proceed to, or terminate in any thing beyond the thoughts of the mind; however they may tend to practice (as as all exercises of grace do) more remotely. 2. There is another kind of acts of grace, that are more strictly called practical, or effective exercises, because they immediately respect something to be done. They are the exertions of grace in the commanding acts of the will, directing the outward actions. As when a saint gives a cup of cold water to a disciple, in and from the exercise of the grace of charity; or voluntarily endures persecution in the way of his duty; immediately from the exercise of a supreme love to Christ. Here is the exertion of grace producing its effect in outward actions. These exercises of grace are practical and productive of good works, not only in this sense, that they are of a productive nature (for so are all exercises of true grace), but they are the producing acts. This is properly the exercise of grace in the act of the will; and this is properly the practice of the soul. And the soul is the immediate actor of no other practice but this; the motions of the body follow from the laws of union between the soul and body, which God, and not the soul, has fixed and does maintain. The act of the soul and the exercise of grace, that is exerted in the performance of a good work, is the good work itself, so far as the soul is concerned in it, or so far as it is the soul's good work. The determinations of the will are indeed our very actions, so far as they are properly ours, as Dr. Doddridge observes.* In this practice of the soul is included the aim and intention of the soul, which is the agent. For not only should we not look on the motions of a statue, doing justice or distributing alms by clockwork, as any acts of obedience to Christ in that statue; but neither would any body call the voluntary actions of a man, externally and materially agreeable to a command of Christ, by the name of obedience to Christ, if he had never heard of Christ, or any of his commands, or had no thought of his commands in what he did. If the acts of obedience and good fruit spoken of, be looked upon, not as mere motions of the body, but as acts of the soul; the whole exercise of the spirit of the mind in the action must be taken in, with the end acted for, and the respect the soul then has to God, &c., otherwise they are no acts of denial of ourselves, or obedience to God, or service done to him, but something else. Such effective exercises of grace as these that I have now described, many of the Martyrs have experienced in a high degree. And all true saints live a life of such acts of grace as these; as they all live a life of gracious works, of which these operative exertions of grace are the life and soul. And this is the obedience and fruit that God mainly looks at, as he looks at the soul, more than the body; as much as the soul, in the constitution of the human nature, is the superior part. As God looks at the obedience and practice of the man, he looks at the practice of the soul; for the soul is the man in God's sight, "for the Lord seeth not as man seeth, for he looketh on the heart."

* Scripture Doctrine of Salvation, Sermon I. p. 11.

And thus it is that obedience, good works, good fruits, are to be taken, when given in Scripture as a sure evidence to our own consciences of a true principle of grace: even as including the obedience and practice of the soul, as preceding and governing the actions of the body. When practice is given in Scripture as the main evidence to others of our true Christianity, then is meant *that* in our practice which is visible to them, even our outward actions: but when practice is given as a sure evidence of our real Christianity to our own consciences, then is meant *that* in our practice which is visible to our own consciences; which is not only the motion of our bodies, but the exertion of the soul, which directs and commands that motion; which is more directly and immediately under the view of our own consciences, than the act of the body. And that this is the intent of the Scripture, not only does the nature and reason of the thing show, but it is plain by the Scripture itself. Thus it is evident that when Christ, at the conclusion of his sermon on the mount, speaks of doing or practising those sayings of his, as the grand sign of professors being true disciples, without which he likens them to a man that built his house upon the sand, and with which, to a man that built his house upon a rock; he has a respect, not only to the outward behavior, but to the inward exercise of the mind in that behavior: as is evident by observing what those preceding sayings of his are that he refers to, when he speaks of our doing or practising them; and we shall find they are such as these: "Blessed are the poor in spirit; blessed are they that mourn; blessed are the meek; blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness; blessed are the merciful; blessed are the pure in heart; whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, &c.; whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, &c.; love your enemies; take no thought for your life," and others of the like nature, which imply inward exercises: and when Christ says, John xiv. 2, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me;" he has evidently a special respect to that command several times repeated in the same discourse (which he calls, by way of eminence, his commandment), that they should love one another as he had loved them (see chap. xiii. 34, 35, and chap. xv. 10, 12, 13, 14). But this command respects chiefly an exercise of the mind or heart, though exerted in practice. So when the Apostle John says, 1 John ii. 3, "Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments;" he has plainly a principal respect to the same command, as appears by what follows, ver. 7—11, and 2d Epist. ver. 5, 6; and when we are told in Scripture that men shall at the last day be judged according to their works, and all shall receive according to the things done in the body, it is not to be understood only of outward acts; for if so, why is God so often spoken of as searching the hearts and trying the reins, "that he may render to every one according to his works?" As Rev. ii. 23, "And all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts; and I will give unto every one according to his works." Jer. xvii. 9, 10, "I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings." But if by his ways, and the fruit of his doings, is meant only the actions of his body, what need of searching the heart and reins in order to know them? Hezekiah in his sickness pleads his practice as an evidence of his title to God's favor, as including not only his outward actions, but what was in his heart: Isa. xxxviii. 3, "Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart."

Though in this great evidence of sincerity that the Scripture gives us, what is inward is of greatest importance; yet what is outward is included and in-

tended, as connected with the practical exertion of grace in the will, directing and commanding the actions of the body. And hereby are effectually cut off all pretensions that any man can have to evidences of godliness, who externally lives wickedly; because the great evidence lies in that inward exercise and practice of the soul, which consists in the acts of the will, commanding outward acts. But it is known, that these commanding acts of the will are not one way, and the actions of the bodily organs another: for the unalterable law of nature is, that they should be united as long as soul and body are united, and the organs are not so destroyed as to be incapable of those motions that the soul commands. Thus it would be ridiculous for a man to plead, that the commanding act of his will was to go to the public worship, while his feet carry him to a tavern or brothel-house; or that the commanding act of his will was to give such a piece of money he had in his hand to a poor beggar, while his hand at the same instant kept it back, and held it fast.

Secondly, I proceed to show, that Christian practice, taken in the sense that has been explained, is the chief of all the evidences of a saving sincerity in religion, to the consciences of the professors of it; much to be preferred to the method of the first convictions, enlightenings, and comforts in conversion, or any immanent discoveries or exercises of grace whatsoever, that begin and end in contemplation.* The evidence of this appears by the following arguments.

Argument I.—Reason plainly shows, that those things which put it to the proof what men will actually cleave to and prefer in their practice, when left to follow their own choice and inclinations, are the proper trial what they do really prefer in their hearts. Sincerity in religion, as has been observed already, consists in setting God highest in the heart, in choosing him before other things, in having a heart to sell all for Christ, &c. But a man's actions are the proper trial what a man's heart prefers. As for instance, when it is so that God and other things come to stand in competition, God is as it were set before a man on one hand, and his worldly interest or pleasure on the other (as it often is so in the course of a man's life); his behavior in such case, in actually cleaving to the one and forsaking the other, is the proper trial which he prefers. Sincerity consists in forsaking all for Christ in heart; but to forsake all for Christ in heart, is the very same thing as to have a heart to forsake all for Christ; but certainly the proper trial whether a man has a heart to forsake all for Christ, is his being actually put to it, the having Christ and other things coming in competition, that he must actually or practically cleave to one and forsake the other. To forsake all for Christ in heart, is the same thing as to have a heart to forsake all for Christ when called to it: but the highest proof to ourselves and others, that we have a heart to forsake all for Christ when called to it, is actually doing it when called to it, or so far as called to it. To follow Christ in heart is to have a heart to follow him. To deny ourselves in heart for Christ, is the same thing as to have a heart to deny ourselves for him in fact. The main and most proper proof of a man's having a heart to any thing, concerning which he is at liberty to follow his own inclinations, and either to do or not to do as he pleases, is his doing of it. When a man is at liberty whether to speak or keep silence, the most proper evidence of his having a heart to speak, is his speaking. When a man is at liberty whether to walk or sit still, the proper proof

* "Look upon John, Christ's beloved disciple and bosom companion! He had received the anointing to know him that is true, and he knew that he knew him, 1 John ii. 3. But how did he know that? He might be deceived; (as it is strange to see what a melancholy fancy will do, and the effects of it; as honest men are reputed to have weak brains, and never saw the depths of the secrets of God;) what is his last proof? "Because we keep his commandments." *Shepard's Parable*, Part. I. p. 131.

of his having a heart to walk, is his walking. Godliness consists not in a heart to intend to do the will of God, but in a heart to do it. The children of Israel in the wilderness had the former, of whom we read, Deut. v. 27, 28, 29, "Go thou near, and hear all that the Lord our God shall say; and speak thou unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee, and we will hear it, and do it. And the Lord heard the voice of your words, when ye spake unto me; and the Lord said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto thee; they have well said all that they have spoken. O that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear me and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!" The people manifested that they had a heart to intend to keep God's commandments, and to be very forward in those intentions; but God manifests, that this was far from being the thing that he desired, wherein true godliness consists, even a heart actually to keep them.

It is therefore exceedingly absurd, and even ridiculous, for any to pretend that they have a good heart, while they live a wicked life, or do not bring forth the fruit of universal holiness in their practice. For it is proved in fact, that such men do not love God above all. It is foolish to dispute against plain fact and experience. Men that live in ways of sin, and yet flatter themselves that they shall go to heaven, or expect to be received hereafter as holy persons, without a holy practice, act as though they expected to make a fool of their Judge. Which is implied in what the apostle says (speaking of men's doing good works and living a holy life, thereby exhibiting evidence of their title to everlasting life), Gal. vi. 7: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." As much as to say, "Do not deceive yourselves with an expectation of reaping life everlasting hereafter, if you do not sow to the Spirit here; it is in vain to think that God will be made a fool of by you, that he will be shammed and baffled with shadows instead of substances, and with vain pretence, instead of that good fruit which he expects, when the contrary to what you pretend appears plainly in your life, before his face." In this manner the word *mock* is sometimes used in Scripture. Thus Delilah says to Sampson, "behold thou hast mocked me, and told me lies." Judges xvi. 10, 13; i. e., "Thou hast baffled me, as though you would have made a fool of me, as if I might be easily turned off with any vain pretence, instead of the truth." So it is said that Lot, when he told his sons in law that God would destroy that place, "he seemed as one that mocked, to his sons in law," Gen. xix. 14; i. e., he seemed as one that would make a game of them, as though they were such credulous fools as to regard such bugbears. But the great Judge, whose eyes are as a flame of fire, will not be mocked or baffled with any pretences, without a holy life. If in his name men have prophesied and wrought miracles, and have had faith, so that they could remove mountains, and cast out devils, and however high their religious affections have been, however great resemblances they have had of grace, and though their hiding-place has been so dark and deep, that no human skill nor search could find them out; yet if they are workers or practisers of iniquity, they cannot hide their hypocrisy from their Judge: Job xxxiv. 22, "There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves." Would a wise prince suffer himself to be fooled and baffled by a subject, who should pretend that he was a loyal subject, and should tell his prince that he had an entire affection to him, and that at such and such a time he had experience of it, and felt his affections strongly working towards him, and should come expecting to be accepted and rewarded by his prince, as one of his best friends on that account, though

he lived in rebellion against him, following some pretender to his crown, and from time to time stirring up sedition against him? Or would a master suffer himself to be shammed and gulled by a servant, that should pretend to great experiences of love and honor towards him in his heart, and a great sense of his worthiness and kindness to him, when at the same time he refused to obey him, and he could get no service done by him?

ARGUMENT II.—As reason shows, that those things which occur in the course of life, that put it to the proof whether men will prefer God to other things in practice, are the proper trial of the uprightness and sincerity of their hearts; so the same are represented as the proper trial of the sincerity of professors in the Scripture. There we find that such things are called by that very name, trials or temptations (which I before observed are both words of the same signification). The things that put it to the proof, whether men will prefer God to other things in practice, are the difficulties of religion, or those things which occur, that make the practice of duty difficult and cross to other principles beside the love of God; because in them, God and other things are both set before men together, for their actual and practical choice; and it comes to this, that we cannot hold to both, but one or the other must be forsaken. And these things are all over the Scripture called by the name of trials or proofs.* And they are called by this name, because hereby professors are tried and proved of what sort they be, whether they be really what they profess and appear to be; and because in them, the reality of a supreme love to God is brought to the test of experiment and fact; they are the proper proofs in which it is truly determined by experience, whether men have a thorough disposition of heart to cleave to God or no: Deut. viii. 2, "And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments or no:" Judges ii. 21, 22, "I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them, of the nations which Joshua left when he died; that through them I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the Lord." So chap. iii. 1, 4, and Exod. xvi. 4.

The Scripture, when it calls these difficulties of religion by the name of temptations or trials, explains itself to mean thereby the trial or experiment of their faith: James i. 2, 3, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience:" 1 Pet. i. 6, 7, "Now, for a season ye are in heaviness, through manifold temptations; that the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold," &c. So the Apostle Paul speaks of that expensive duty of parting with our substance to the poor, as the proof of the sincerity of the love of Christians: 2 Cor. viii. 8. And the difficulties of religion are often represented in Scripture, as being the trial of professors, in the same manner that the furnace is the proper trial of gold and silver: Psal. lxvi. 10, 11, "Thou, O God, hast proved us: thou has tried us as silver is tried: thou broughtest us into the net, thou laidest affliction upon our loins." Zech. xiii. 9, "And I will bring the third part of them through the fire; and I will refine them as silver is refined; and I will try them as gold is tried." That which has the color and appearance of gold, is put into the furnace to try whether it be what it seems to be, real gold or no. So the difficulties of religion are called trials, because they try those that have

* 2 Cor. viii. 2; Heb. xi. 36; 1 Pet. i. 7; chap. iv. 12; Gen. xxii. 1; Deut. viii. 2, 16; chap. xiii. 3; Exod. xv. 25; chap. xvi. 4; Judges ii. 22; chap. iii. 1, 4; Psal. lxvi. 10, 11; Dan. xii. 10; Rev. iii. 10; Job xxiii. 10; Zech. xiii. 9; James i. 12; Rev. ii. 10; Luke viii. 13; Acts xx. 19; James i. 2, 3; 1 Pet. i. 6.

the profession and appearance of saints, whether they are what they appear to be, real saints.

If we put true gold into the furnace, we shall find its great value and preciousness: so the truth and inestimable value of the virtues of a true Christian appear when under these trials: 1 Pet. i. 7, "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, might be found unto praise, and honor, and glory." True and pure gold will come out of the furnace in full weight; so true saints, when tried, come forth as gold, Job xxiii. 10. Christ distinguishes true grace from counterfeit by this, that it is gold tried in the fire, Rev. iii. 17, 18. So that it is evident, that these things are called trials in Scripture, principally as they try or prove the sincerity of professors. And, from what has now been observed, it is evident that they are the most proper trial or proof of their sincerity; inasmuch as the very meaning of the word trial, as it is ordinarily used in Scripture, is the difficulty occurring in the way of a professor's duty, as the trial or experiment of his sincerity. If trial of sincerity be the proper name of these difficulties of religion, then, doubtless, these difficulties of religion are properly and eminently the trial of sincerity; for they are doubtless eminently what they are called by the Holy Ghost: God gives things their name from that which is eminently their nature. And, if it be so, that these things are the proper and eminent trial, proof, or experiment of the sincerity of professors, then certainly the result of the trial or experiment (that is, persons' behavior or practice under such trials) is the proper and eminent evidence of their sincerity; for they are called trials or proofs, only with regard to the result, and because the effect is eminently the proof or evidence. And this is the most proper proof and evidence to the conscience of those that are the subjects of these trials. For when God is said by these things to try men, and prove them, to see what is in their hearts, and whether they will keep his commandments or no; we are not to understand, that it is for his own information, or that he may obtain evidence himself of their sincerity (for he needs no trials for his information); but chiefly for their conviction, and to exhibit evidence to their consciences.*

Thus, when God is said to prove Israel by the difficulties they met with in the wilderness, and by the difficulties they met with from their enemies in Canaan, to know what was in their hearts, whether they would keep his commandments or no; it must be understood, that it was to discover them to themselves, that they might know what was in their own hearts. So when God tempted or tried Abraham with that difficult command of offering up his son, it was not for his satisfaction, whether he feared God or no, but for Abraham's own greater satisfaction and comfort, and the more clear manifestation of the favor of God to him. When Abraham had proved faithful under this trial, God says to him, "Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me." Which plainly implies, that in this practical exercise of Abraham's grace under this trial, was a clearer evidence of the truth of his grace, than ever was before; and the greatest evidence to Abraham's conscience; because God himself gives it to Abraham as such, for his comfort and rejoicing; and speaks of it to him as what might be the greatest evidence to his conscience of his being upright in the sight of his Judge. Which proves what I say, that holy practice, under trials, is the highest evidence of the sincerity of professors to their own consciences. And we find that Christ, from time to time, took the

* "I am persuaded, as Calvin is, that all the several trials of men are to show them to themselves, and to the world, that they be but counterfeits; and to make saints known to themselves the better, Rom. v. 5. Tribulation works trial, and that hope, Prov. xvii. 3. If you will know whether it will hold weight, the trial will tell you. *Shepard's Parable*, Part I. p. 191.

same method to convince the consciences of those that pretended friendship to him, and to show them what they were. This was the method he took with the rich young man, Matt. xix. 16, &c. He seemed to show a great respect to Christ; he came kneeling to him, and called him good Master, and made a great profession of obedience to the commandments; but Christ tried him, by bidding him go and sell all that he had, and give to the poor, and come and take up his cross and follow him, telling him that then he should have treasure in heaven. So he tried another that we read of, Matt. viii. 20. He made a great profession of respect to Christ: says he, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. Christ immediately puts his friendship to the proof, by telling him, that the foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had nests, but that the Son of Man had not where to lay his head. And thus Christ is wont still to try professed disciples in general, in his providence. So the seed sown, in every kind of ground, stony ground, thorny ground, and good ground, which, in all appears alike, when it first springs up; yet is tried, and the difference made to appear, by the burning heat of the sun.

Seeing therefore, that these are the things that God makes use of to try us, it is undoubtedly the surest way for us to pass a right judgment on ourselves, to try ourselves by the same things. These trials of his are not for his information, but for ours; therefore we ought to receive our information from thence. The surest way to know our gold, is to look upon it and examine it in God's furnace, where he tries it for that end, that we may see what it is. If we have a mind to know whether a building stands strong or no, we must look upon it when the wind blows. If we would know whether that which appears in the form of wheat, has the real substance of wheat, or be only chaff, we must observe it when it is winnowed. If we would know whether a staff be strong, or a rotten broken reed, we must observe it when it is leaned on, and weight is borne upon it. If we would weigh ourselves justly, we must weigh ourselves in God's scales that he makes use of to weigh us.* These trials, in the course of our practice, are as it were the balances in which our hearts are weighed, or in which Christ and the world, or Christ and his competitors, as to the esteem and regard they have in our hearts are weighed, or are put into opposite scales, by which there is opportunity to see which preponderates. When a man is brought to the dividing of paths, the one of which leads to Christ, and the other to the object of his lusts, to see which way he will go, or is brought, and as it were set between Christ and the world, Christ on the right hand, and the world on the left, so that, if he goes to one, he must leave the other, to see which his heart inclines most to, or which preponderates in his heart; this is just the same thing as laying Christ and the world in two opposite scales; and his going to the one, and leaving the other, is just the same thing as the sinking of one scale, and rising of the other. A man's practice, therefore, under the trials of God's providence, is as much the proper evidence of the superior inclination of his heart as the motion of the balance, with different weights, in opposite scales, is the proper experiment of the superior weight.

Argument III.—Another argument, that holy practice, in the sense which has been explained, is the highest kind of evidence of the truth of grace to the consciences of Christians, is, that in practice, grace, in Scripture style, is said to be made perfect, or to be finished. So the Apostle James says, James ii. 22,

* Dr. Sibbs, in his Bruised Reed, says, "When Christ's will cometh in competition with any worldly loss or gain, yet, if then, in that particular case, the heart will stoop to Christ, it is a true sign. For the truest trial of the power of grace, is in such particular cases as touch us the nearest; for there our corruption maketh the greatest head. When Christ came home to the young man in the gospel, he lost a disciple of him."

'Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect" (or finished, as the word in the original properly signifies)?" So the love of God is said to be made perfect, or finished, in keeping his commandments. 1 John ii. 4, 5, "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him: but, whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected." The commandment of Christ, which the apostle has especially respect to, when he here speaks of our keeping his commandments, is (as I observed before) that great commandment of his, which respects deeds of love to our brethren, as appears by the following verses. Again, the love of God is said to be perfected in the same sense, chapter iv. 12: "If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us." Here, doubtless, the apostle has still respect to loving one another, in the same manner that he had explained in the preceding chapter, speaking of loving one another, as a sign of the love of God, verses 17, 18: "Whoso hath this world's goods, and shutteth up his bowels, &c., how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed (or in work) and in truth." By thus loving in work, the apostle says, "The love of God is perfected in us." Grace is said to be perfected or finished in holy practice, as therein it is brought to its proper effect, and to that exercise which is the end of the principle; the tendency and design of grace herein is reached, and its operation completed and crowned. As the tree is made perfect in the fruit; it is not perfected in the seed's being planted in the ground; it is not perfected in the first quickening of the seed, and in its putting forth root and sprout; nor is it perfected when it comes up out of the ground; nor is it perfected in bringing forth leaves; nor yet in putting forth blossoms: but, when it has brought forth good ripe fruit, when it is perfected, therein it reaches its end, the design of the tree is finished: all that belongs to the tree is completed and brought to its proper effect in the fruit. So is grace in its practical exercises. Grace is said to be made perfect or finished in its work or fruit, in the same manner as it is said of sin, James i. 15, "When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." Here are three steps; first, sin in its principle or habit, in the being of lust in the heart; and nextly, here is its conceiving, consisting in the immanent exercises of it in the mind; and lastly, here is the fruit that was conceived, actually brought forth in the wicked work and practice. And this the apostle calls the finishing or perfecting of sin: for the word, in the original, is the same that is translated perfected in those forementioned places.

Now certainly, if it be so, if grace be in this manner made perfect in its fruit, if these practical exercises of grace are those exercises wherein grace is brought to its proper effect and end, and the exercises wherein whatsoever belongs to its design, tendency and operation, is completed and crowned; then these exercises must be the highest evidences of grace, above all other exercises. Certainly the proper nature and tendency of every principle must appear best and most fully in its most perfect exercises, or in those exercises wherein its nature is most completely exerted, and in its tendency most fully answered and crowned, in its proper effect and end. If we would see the proper nature of any thing whatsoever, and see it in its full distinction from other things; let us look upon it in the finishing of it. The Apostle James says, by works is faith made perfect; and introduces this as an argument to prove, that works are the chief evidence of faith, whereby the sincerity of the professors of faith is justified, James ii. And the Apostle John, after he had once and again told us that love was made perfect in keeping Christ's commandments, observes, 1 John iv.

18. That perfect love casteth out fear; meaning (at least in part) love made perfect in this sense; agreeable to what he had said in the foregoing chapter, that, by loving in deed, or work, we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts, verses 18, 19.

Argument IV.—Another thing which makes it evident, that holy practice is the principal evidence that we ought to make use of in judging both of our own and others' sincerity, is, that this evidence is above all others insisted on in Scripture. A common acquaintance with the Scripture, together with a little attention and observation, will be sufficient to show to any one that this is ten times more insisted on as a note of true piety, throughout the Scripture, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelations, than any thing else. And, in the New Testament, where Christ and his apostles do expressly, and of declared purpose, lay down signs of true godliness, this is almost wholly insisted on. It may be observed, that Christ, and his apostles, do not only often say those things, in their discoursing on the great doctrines of religion, which do show what the nature of true godliness must be, or from whence the nature and signs of it may be inferred by just consequence, and often occasionally mention many things which do appertain to godliness; but they do also often, of set purpose, give signs and marks for the trial of professors, putting them upon trying themselves by the signs they give, introducing what they say, with such like expressions as these: "By this you shall know, that you know God: by this are manifest the children of God, and the children of the devil: he that hath this, builds on a good foundation; he that hath it not, builds on the sand: hereby we shall assure our hearts: he is the man that loveth Christ," &c. But I can find no place, where either Christ or his apostles do, in this manner, give signs of godliness (though the places are many), but where Christian practice is almost the only thing insisted on. Indeed in many of these places, love to the brethren is spoken of as a sign of godliness; and, as I have observed before, there is no one virtuous affection, or disposition, so often expressly spoken of as a sign of true grace, as our having love one to another: but then the Scriptures explain themselves to intend chiefly this love as exercised and expressed in practice, or in deeds of love. So does the Apostle John, who, above all others, insists on love to the brethren as a sign of godliness, most expressly explain himself, in that 1 John iii. 14, &c, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren: he that loveth not his brother, abideth in death. Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us love, not in word, neither in tongue, but in deed (i. e., in deeds of love) and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him." So that when the Scripture so much insists on our loving one another, as a great sign of godliness, we are not thereby to understand the immanent workings of affection which men feel one to another, so much as the soul's practising all the duties of the second table of the law; all which the New Testament tells us again and again, a true love one to another comprehends, Rom. xiii. 8 and 10, Gal. v. 14, Matt. xxii. 39, 40. So that, really, there is no place in the New Testament where the declared design is to give signs of godliness, but that holy practice, and keeping Christ's commandments, is the mark chosen out from all others to be insisted on. Which is an invincible argument, that it is the chief of all the evidences of godliness: unless we suppose that when Christ and his apostles, on design, set themselves about this business of giving signs, by which professing Christians, in all ages, might determine their state; they did not know how

to choose signs so well as we could have chosen for them. But, if we make the word of Christ our rule, then undoubtedly those marks which Christ and his apostles did chiefly lay down, and give to us, that we might try ourselves by them, those same marks we ought especially to receive, and chiefly to make use of, in the trial of ourselves.* And surely those things, which Christ and his apostles chiefly insisted on, in the rules they gave, ministers ought chiefly to insist on in the rules they give. To insist much on those things that the Scripture insists little on, and to insist very little on those things on which the Scripture insists much, is a dangerous thing; because it is going out of God's way, and is to judge ourselves, and guide others, in an unscriptural manner. God knew which way of leading and guiding souls was safest and best for them: he insisted so much on some things, because he knew it to be needful that they should be insisted on; and let other things more alone as a wise God, because he knew it was not best for us, so much to lay the weight of the trial there. As the Sabbath was made for man, so the Scriptures were made for man; and they are, by infinite wisdom, fitted for our use and benefit. We should, therefore, make them our guide in all things, in our thoughts of religion, and of ourselves. And for us to make that great which the Scripture makes little, and that little which the Scripture makes great, tends to give us a monstrous idea of religion; and (at least indirectly and gradually) to lead us wholly away from the right rule, and from a right opinion of ourselves, and to establish delusion and hypocrisy.

Argument V.—Christian practice is plainly spoken of in the word of God, as the main evidence of the truth of grace, not only to others, but to men's own consciences. It is not only more spoken of and insisted on than other signs, but in many places where it is spoken of, it is represented as the chief of all evidences. This is plain in the manner of expression from time to time. If God were now to speak from heaven to resolve our doubts concerning signs of godliness, and should give some particular sign, that by it all might know whether they were sincerely godly or not, with such emphatical expressions as these, the man that has such a qualification or mark, "that is the man that is a true saint, that is the very man, by this you may know, this is the thing by which it is manifest who are saints and who are sinners, such men as these are saints indeed;" should not we look upon it as a thing beyond doubt, that this was given, as a special, and eminently distinguishing note of true godliness? But this is the very case with respect to the sign of grace I am speaking of; God has again and again uttered himself in his word in this very manner, concerning Christian practice, as John xiv., "he that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." Thus Christ in this place gives to the disciples, not so much to guide them in judging of others, as to apply to themselves for their own comfort after his departure, as appears by every word of the context. And by the way I would observe, that not only the emphasis with which Christ utters himself is remarkable, but also his so much insisting on, and repeating the matter, as he does in the context: verse 15, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." Verse 23, "If a man love me, he will keep my words." And verse 24, "He that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings." And in the next chapter over and over: verse 2, "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit; he purgeth it." Verse 8, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples." Verse 14, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."

* "It is a sure rule, says Dr. Preston, that, what the Scriptures bestow much words on, we should have much thoughts on: and what the Holy Ghost urgeth most, we should prize most." *Church's Carriage.*

We have this mark laid down with the same emphasis again, John viii. 31: "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." And again, 1 John ii. 3, "Hereby do we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments." And verse 5, "Whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected; hereby know we, that we are in him." And chapter iii. 18, 19, "Let us love in deed, and in truth; hereby we know that we are of the truth." What is translated *hereby* would have been a little more emphatical, if it had been rendered more literally from the original, by this we do know.—And how evidently is holy practice spoken of as the grand note of distinction between the children of God and the children of the devil, in verse 10, of the same chapter? "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil." Speaking of a holy, and a wicked practice, as may be seen in all the context; as verse 3, "Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure." Verses 6—10, "Whosoever abideth in him, sinneth not; whosoever sinneth, hath not seen him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you; he that doeth righteousness, is righteous, even as he is righteous: he that committeth sin is of the devil.—Whosoever is born of God, sinneth not.—Whosoever doeth not righteousness, is not of God." So we have the like emphasis, 2 John 6: "This is love, that we walk after his commandments;" that is (as we must understand it), this is the proper evidence of love. So 1 John v. 3, "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments." So the Apostle James, speaking of the proper evidences of true and pure religion, says, James i. 27, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." We have the like emphatical expressions used about the same thing in the Old Testament, Job xxviii. 28: "And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding." Jer. xxii. 15, 16, "Did not thy father eat and drink, and do judgment and justice? He judged the cause of the poor and needy: was not this to know me? saith the Lord." Psal. xxxiv. 11, &c., "Come, ye children, unto me, and I will teach you the fear of the Lord.—Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile; depart from evil, and do good; seek peace and pursue it." Psal. xv., at the beginning, "Who shall abide in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly," &c. Psal. xxiv. 3, 4, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart," &c. Psal. cxix. 1, "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord." Verse 6, "Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect to all thy commandments." Prov. viii. 13, "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil."

So the Scripture never uses such emphatical expressions concerning any other signs of hypocrisy, and unsoundness of heart, as concerning an unholy practice. So Gal. vi. 7, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, "Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, &c., shall inherit the kingdom of God." Eph. v. 5, 6, "For this ye know, that no whoremonger nor unclean person, &c., hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ, and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words." 1 John iii. 7, 8, "Little children, let no man deceive you; he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous; he that committeth sin, is of the devil." Chap. ii. 4, "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." And chap. i. 6, "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk

in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth." James i. 26, "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain." Chap. iii. 14, 15, "If ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish." Psal. cxxv. 5, "As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity." Isa. xxxv. 8, "A high way shall be there, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it." Rev. xxi. 27, "And there shall in no wise enter into it, whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie." And in many places, "Depart from me, I know you not, ye that work iniquity."

Argument VI.—Another thing which makes it evident, that holy practice is the chief of all the signs of the sincerity of professors, not only to the world, but to their own consciences, is, that this is the grand evidence which will hereafter be made use of, before the judgment seat of God; according to which his judgment will be regulated, and the state of every professor of religion unalterably determined. In the future judgment, there will be an open trial of professors, and evidences will be made use of in the judgment. For God's future judging of men, in order to their eternal retribution, will not be his trying, and finding out, and passing a judgment upon the state of men's hearts, in his own mind; but it will be, a declarative judgment; and the end of it will be, not God's forming a judgment within himself, but the manifestation of his judgment, and the righteousness of it, to men's own consciences, and to the world. And therefore the day of judgment is called the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God, Rom. ii. 5. And the end of God's future trial and judgment of men, as to the part that each one in particular is to have in the judgment, will be especially the clear manifestation of God's righteous judgment, with respect to him, to his conscience; as is manifest by Matt. xviii. 31, to the end; chap. xx. 8—15, chap. xxii. 11, 12, 13, chap. xxv. 19—30, and verse 35, to the end, Luke xix. 15—23. And therefore, though God needs no medium whereby to make the truth evident to himself, yet evidences will be made use of in his future judging of men. And doubtless the evidences that will be made use of in their trial, will be such as will be best fitted to serve the ends of the judgment; viz., the manifestation of the righteous judgment of God, not only to the world, but to men's own consciences. But the Scriptures do abundantly teach us, that the grand evidences which the Judge will make use of in the trial, for these ends, according to which the judgment of every one shall be regulated, and the irreversible sentence passed, will be men's works, or practice, here in this world: Rev. xx. 12, "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened;—and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." So verse 13, "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works." 2 Cor. v. 10, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, whether it be good or bad." So men's practice is the only evidence that Christ represents the future judgment as regulated by, in that most particular description of the day of judgment, which we have in the Holy Bible, Matt. xxv. at the latter end. See also Rom. ii. 6, 13, Jer. xvii. 10, Job. xxxiv. 11, Prov. xxiv. 12, Jer. xxxii. 19, Rev. xxii. 12, Matt. xvi. 27, Rev. ii. 23, Ezek. xxxiii. 20, 1 Pet. i. 17. The Judge, at the day of judgment, will not

(for the conviction of men's own consciences, and to manifest them to the world) go about to examine men, as to the method of their experiences, or set every man to tell his story of the manner of his conversion; but his works will be brought forth, as evidences of what he is, what he has done in darkness and in light: Eccl. xii. 14, "For God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." In the trial that professors shall be the subjects of, in the future judgment, God will make use of the same evidences, to manifest them to themselves and to the world, which he makes use of to manifest them, in the temptations or trials of his providence here, viz., their practice, in cases wherein Christ and other things come into actual and immediate competition. At the day of judgment, God, for the manifestation of his righteous judgment, will weigh professors in a balance that is visible. And the balance will be the same that he weighs men in now, which has been already described.

Hence we may undoubtedly infer, that men's works (taken in the sense that has been explained) are the highest evidences by which they ought to try themselves. Certianly that which our supreme Judge will chiefly make use of to judge us by, when we come to stand before him, we should chiefly make use of, to judge ourselves by.* If it had not been revealed in what manner, and by what evidence the Judge would proceed with us hereafter, how natural would it be for one to say, "O that I knew what token God will chiefly look for and insist upon in the last and decisive judgment, and which he expects that all should be able to produce, who would then be accepted of him, and according to which sentence shall be passed; that I might know what token or evidence especially to look at and seek after now, as I would be sure not to fail then." And seeing God has so plainly and abundantly revealed what this token or evidence is, surely, if we act wisely, we shall regard it as of the greatest importance.

Now from all that has been said, I think it to be abundantly manifest, that Christian practice is the most proper evidence of the gracious sincerity of professors, to themselves and others; and the chief of all the marks of grace, the sign of signs, and evidence of evidences, that which seals and crowns all other signs.——I had rather have the testimony of my conscience, that I have such a saying of my Supreme Judge on my side, as that, John xiv. 21, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me;" than the judgment and fullest approbation of all the wise, sound, and experienced divines, that have lived this thousand years, on the most exact and critical examination of my experiences, as to the manner of my conversion. Not that there are no other good evidences of a state of grace but this. There may be other exercises of grace besides these efficient exercises, which the saints may have in contemplation, that may be very satisfying to them, but yet this is the chief and most proper evidence. There may be several good evidences that a tree is a fig-tree; but the highest and most proper evidence of it is, that it actually bears figs. It is possible, that a man may have a good assurance of a state of grace, at his first conversion, before he has had opportunity to gain assurance, by this great evidence I am speaking of.—If a man hears that a great treasure is offered him, in a distant place, on condition that he will prize it so much, as to be willing to leave what he possesses at home, and go a journey for it, over the rocks and mountains that are in the way, to the place where it is; it is possible

* "That which God maketh a rule of his own judgment, as that by which he judgeth of every man, that is a sure rule for for every man to judge himself by. That which we shall be judged by at the last day, is a sure rule to apply to ourselves for the present. Now by our obedience and works he judgeth us. "He will give to every man according to his works." *Dr. Preston's Church's Carriage.*

the man may be well assured, that he values the treasure to the degree spoken of, as soon as the offer is made him: he may feel within him, a willingness to go for the treasure, beyond all doubt; but yet, this does not hinder but that his actual going for it, is the highest and most proper evidence of his being willing, not only to others, but to himself. But then as an evidence to himself, his outward actions, and the motions of his body in his journey, are not considered alone, exclusive of the action of his mind, and a consciousness within himself, of the thing that moves him, and the end he goes for; otherwise his bodily motion is no evidence to him of his prizing the treasure. In such a manner is Christian practice the most proper evidence of a saving value of the pearl of great price, and treasure hid in the field.

Christian practice is the sign of signs, in this sense, that it is the great evidence, which confirms and crowns all other signs of godliness. There is no one grace of the Spirit of God, but that Christian practice is the most proper evidence of the truth of it. As it is with the members of our bodies, and all our utensils, the proper proof of the soundness and goodness of them, is in the use of them: so it is with our graces (which are given to be used in practice, as much as our hands and feet, or the tools with which we work, or the arms with which we fight), the proper trial and proof of them is in their exercise in practice. Most of the things we use are serviceable to us, and so have their serviceableness proved, in some pressure, straining, agitation, or collision. So it is with a bow, a sword, an axe, a saw, a cord, a chain, a staff, a foot, a tooth, &c. And they that are so weak, as not to bear the strain or pressure we need to put them to, are good for nothing. So it is with all the virtues of the mind. The proper trial and proof of them, is in being exercised under those temptations and trials that God brings us under, in the course of his providence, and in being put to such service as strains hard upon the principles of nature.

Practice is the proper proof of the true and saving knowledge of God; as appears by that of the apostle already mentioned, "hereby do we know that we know him, that we keep his commandments." It is in vain for us to profess that we know God, if in works we deny him, Tit. i. 16. And if we know God, but glorify him not as God; our knowledge will only condemn us, and not save us, Rom. i. 21. The great note of that knowledge which saves and makes happy, is, that it is practical: John xiii. 17, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." Job xxviii. 28, "To depart from evil is understanding."

Holy practice is the proper evidence of repentance. When the Jews professed repentance, when they came confessing their sins, to John, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; he directed them to the right way of getting and exhibiting proper evidences of the truth of their repentance, when he said to them, "Bring forth fruits meet for repentance," Matt. iii. 8. Which was agreeable to the practice of the Apostle Paul; see Acts xxvi. 20. Pardon and mercy are from time to time promised to him who has this evidence of true repentance, that he forsakes his sin, Prov. xxviii. 13, and Isa. lv. 7, and many other places.

Holy practice is the proper evidence of a saving faith. It is evident that the Apostle James speaks of works, as what do eminently justify faith, or (which is the same thing) justify the professors of faith, and vindicate and manifest the sincerity of their profession, not only to the world, but to their own consciences; as is evident by the instance he gives of Abraham, James ii. 21—24. And in verses 20 and 26, he speaks of the practical and working nature of faith, as the very life and soul of it; in the same manner that the active nature and substance, which is in the body of a man, is the life and soul of that. And

if so, doubtless practice is the proper evidence of the life and soul of true faith, by which it is distinguished from a dead faith. For doubtless, practice is the most proper evidence of a practical nature, and operation the most proper evidence of an operative nature.

Practice is the best evidence of a saving belief of the truth. That is spoken of as the proper evidence of the truth's being in a professing Christian, that he walks in the truth, 3 John 3: "I rejoiced greatly when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth."

Practice is the most proper evidence of a true coming to Christ, and accepting of, and closing with him. A true and saving coming to Christ, is (as Christ often teaches) a coming so as to forsake all for him. And, as was observed before, to forsake all for Christ in heart, is the same thing as to have a heart actually to forsake all; but the proper evidence of having a heart actually to forsake all, is, indeed, actually to forsake all so far as called to it. If a prince make suit to a woman in a far country, that she would forsake her own people, and father's house, and come to him to be his bride; the proper evidence of the compliance of her heart with the king's suit, is her actually forsaking her own people and father's house, and coming to him.—By this her compliance with the king's suit is made perfect, in the same sense that the Apostle James says, By works is faith made perfect.* Christ promises us eternal life, on condition of our coming to him: but it is such a coming as he directed the young man to, who came to inquire what he should do that he might have eternal life; Christ bade him go and sell all that he had, and come to him, and follow him. If he had consented in his heart to the proposal, and had therein come to Christ in his heart, the proper evidence of it would have been his doing of it; and therein his coming to Christ would have been made perfect. When Christ called Levi the publican, when sitting at the receipt of custom, and in the midst of his worldly gains; the closing of Levi's heart with this invitation of his Saviour to come to him, was manifested, and made perfect by his actually rising up, leaving all, and following him, Luke v. 27, 28. Christ, and other things, are set before us together, for us particularly to cleave to one, and forsake the other; in such a case, a practical cleaving to Christ is a practical acceptance of Christ; as much as a beggar's reaching out his hand and taking a gift that is offered, is his practical acceptance of the gift. Yea, that act of the soul that is in cleaving to Christ in practice is itself the most perfect coming of the soul to Christ.

Practice is the most proper evidence of trusting in Christ for salvation. The proper signification of the word *trust*, according to the more ordinary use of it, both in common speech and in the Holy Scriptures, is the emboldening and encouragement of a person's mind, to run some venture in practice, or in something that he does on the credit of another's sufficiency and faithfulness. And, therefore, the proper evidence of his trusting, is the venture he runs in what he does. He is not properly said to run any venture, in a dependence on any thing, that does nothing on that dependence, or whose practice is no otherwise than if he had no dependence. For a man to run a venture on a dependence on another, is for him to do something from that dependence by which he seems to expose

* "Our real taking of Christ appears in our actions and works: Isa. i. 19, 'If ye consent and obey, ye shall eat the good things of the land.' That is, if ye will consent to take JEHOVAH for your Lord and King: if ye give consent, there is the first thing; but that is not enough, but if ye also obey. The consent that standeth in the inward act of the mind, the truth of it will be seen in your obedience, in the acts of your lives. 'If ye consent and obey, ye shall eat the good things of the land;' that is, you shall take of all that he hath that is convenient for you; for then you are married to him in truth, and have an interest in all his goods." *Dr. Preston's Church's Carriage.*

himself, and which he would not do, were it not for that dependence. And, therefore, it is in complying with the difficulties, and seeming dangers of Christian practice, in a dependence on Christ's sufficiency and faithfulness to bestow eternal life, that persons are said to venture themselves upon Christ, and trust in him for happiness and life. They depend on such promises as that, Matt. x. 39, "He that loseth his life for my sake, shall find it." And so they part with all, and venture their all, in a dependence on Christ's sufficiency and truth. And this is the Scripture notion of trusting in Christ, in the exercise of a saving faith in him. Thus Abraham, the father of believers, trusted in Christ, and by faith forsook his own country, in a reliance on the covenant of grace God established with him, Heb. xi. 8, 9. Thus also, "Moses, by faith refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season," Heb. xi. 23, &c. So by faith, others exposed themselves to be stoned and sawn asunder, or slain with the sword; "endured the trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, bonds and imprisonments, and wandered about in sheep skins, and goat skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented." And in this sense the Apostle Paul, by faith trusted in Christ, and committed himself to him, venturing himself, and his whole interest, in a dependence on the ability and faithfulness of his Redeemer, under great persecutions, and in suffering the loss of all things: 2 Tim. i. 12, "For the which cause I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded, that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

If a man should have word brought him from the king of a distant island, that he intended to make him his heir, if, upon receiving the tidings, he immediately leaves his native land and friends, and all that he has in the world, to go to that country, in a dependence on what he hears, then he may be said to venture himself, and all that he has in the world upon it. But, if he only sits still, and hopes for the promised benefit, inwardly pleasing himself with the thoughts of it; he cannot properly be said to venture himself upon it; he runs no venture in the case; he does nothing, otherwise than he would do, if he had received no such tidings, by which he would be exposed to any suffering in case all should fail. So he that, on the credit of what he hears of a future world, and, in a dependence on the report of the gospel, concerning life and immortality, forsakes all, or does so at least, so far as there is occasion, making every thing entirely give place to his eternal interest; he, and he only, may properly be said to venture himself on the report of the gospel. And this is the proper evidence of a true trust in Christ for salvation.

Practice is the proper evidence of a gracious love, both to God and men. The texts that plainly teach this, have been so often mentioned already, that it is needless to repeat them.

Practice is the proper evidence of humility. That expression, and manifestation of humility of heart, which God speaks of, as the great expression of it, that he insists on; that we should look upon as the proper expression and manifestation of it: but this is walking humbly. Micah vi. 8, "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

This is also the proper evidence of the true fear of God: Prov. viii. 13, "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil." Psal. xxxiv. 11, &c., "Come, ye children, hearken unto me, and I will teach you the fear of the Lord. Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile: depart from evil, and do good; seek peace and pursue it." Prov. iii. 7, "Fear the Lord, and depart from

evil." Prov. xvi. 6, "By the fear of the Lord, men depart from evil." Job i. 8, "Hast thou considered my servant Job—a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?" Chap. ii. 3, "Hast thou considered my servant Job—a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? And still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him." Psal. xxxvi. 1, "The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, There is no fear of God before his eyes."

So practice, in rendering again according to benefits received, is the proper evidence of true thankfulness. Psal. cxvi. 12, "What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me?" 2 Chron. xxxii. 25, "But Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him." Paying our vows unto God, and ordering our conversation aright, seem to be spoken of as the proper expression and evidence of true thankfulness, in the 50th Psalm, ver. 14: "Offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows unto the Most High." Verse 22, "Whoso offereth praise, glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I show the salvation of God."

So the proper evidence of gracious desires and longings, and that which distinguishes them from those that are false and vain, is, that they are not idle wishes and wouldings like Balaam's; but effectual in practice, to stir up persons earnestly and thoroughly to seek the things they long for. Psalm xxvii. 4, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after." Psal. lxiii. 1, 2, "O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is, to see thy power and thy glory." Verse 8, "My soul followeth hard after thee." Cant. i. 4, "Draw me, we will run after thee."

Practice is the proper evidence of a gracious hope: 1 John iii. 3, "Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as he is pure." Patient continuance in well-doing, through the difficulties and trials of the Christian course, is often mentioned as the proper expression and fruit of a Christian hope. 1 Thess. i. 3, "Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope." 1 Pet. i. 13, 14, "Wherefore, gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ, as obedient children," &c. Psal. cxix. 166, "Lord, I have hoped in thy salvation, and done thy commandments." Psal. lxxviii. 7, "That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of the Lord, but keep his commandments."

A cheerful practice of our duty, and doing the will of God, is the proper evidence of a truly holy joy. Isa. lxiv. 5, "Thou meetest him that rejoiceth, and worketh righteousness." Psal. cxix. 111, 112, "Thy testimonies have I taken for my heritage for ever; for they are the rejoicing of my heart. I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes alway, even to the end." Verse 14, "I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies as much as in all riches." 1 Cor. xiii. 6, "Charity rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth." 2 Cor. viii. 2, "The abundance of their joy abounded unto the riches of their liberality."

Practice also is the proper evidence of Christian fortitude. The trial of a good soldier is not in his chimney corner, but in the field of battle, 1 Cor. ix. 25, 26, 2 Tim. ii. 3, 4, 5.

And, as the fruit of holy practice is the chief evidence of the truth of grace, so the degree in which experiences have influence on a person's practice, is the surest evidence of the degree of that which is spiritual and divine in his experiences. Whatever pretences persons may make to great discoveries, great love

and joys, they are no further to be regarded than they have influence on their practice. Not but that allowances must be made for the natural temper. But that does not hinder, but that the degree of grace is justly measured, by the degree of the effect in practice. For the effect of grace is as great, and the alteration as remarkable, in a very ill natural temper, as another. Although a person of such a temper will not behave himself so well, with the same degree of grace as another, the diversity from what was before conversion, may be as great; because a person of a good natural temper did not behave himself so ill before conversion.

Thus I have endeavored to represent the evidence there is, that Christian practice is the chief of all the signs of saving grace. And, before I conclude this discourse, I would say something briefly in answer to two objections that may possibly be made by some against what has been said upon this head.

Objection I.—Some may be ready to say, this seems to be contrary to that opinion, so much received among good people; that professors should judge of their state, chiefly by their inward experience, and that spiritual experiences are the main evidences of true grace.

I answer, it is doubtless a true opinion, and justly much received among good people, that professors should chiefly judge of their state by their experience. But it is a great mistake, that what has been said is at all contrary to that opinion. The chief sign of grace to the consciences of Christians, being Christian practice, in the sense that has been explained, and according to what has been shown to be the true notion of Christian practice, is not at all inconsistent with Christian experience, being the chief evidence of grace. Christian or holy practice is spiritual practice; and that is not the motion of a body that knows not how, nor when, nor wherefore it moves: but spiritual practice in man is the practice of a spirit and body jointly, or the practice of a spirit animating, commanding, and actuating a body to which it is united, and over which it has power given it by the Creator. And, therefore, the main thing, in this holy practice, is the holy action of the mind, directing and governing the motions of the body. And the motions of the body are to be looked upon as belonging to Christian practice, only secondarily, and as they are dependent and consequent on the acts of the soul. The exercises of grace that Christians find, or are conscious to within themselves, are what they experience within themselves; and herein therefore lies Christian experience: and this Christian experience consists as much in those operative exercises of grace in the will, that are immediately concerned in the management of the behavior of the body, as in other exercises. These inward exercises are not the less a part of Christian experience, because they have outward behavior immediately connected with them. A strong act of love to God, is not the less a part of spiritual experience, because it is the act that immediately produces and effects some self-denying and expensive outward action, which is much to the honor and glory of God.

To speak of Christian experience and practice, as if they were two things, properly and entirely distinct, is to make a distinction without consideration or reason. Indeed, all Christian experience is not properly called practice, but all Christian practice is properly experience. And the distinction that is made between them, is not only an unreasonable, but an unscriptural distinction. Holy practice is one kind or part of Christian experience; and both reason and Scripture represent it as the chief, and most important and most distinguishing part of it. So it is represented in Jer. xxii. 15, 16: "Did not thy father eat and drink, and do justice and judgment? He judged the cause of the poor and

needy—Was not this to know me, saith the Lord?" Our inward acquaintance with God surely belongs to the head of experimental religion: but this, God represents as consisting chiefly in that experience which there is in holy practice. So the exercises of those graces of the love of God, and the fear of God, are a part of experimental religion: but these the Scripture represents as consisting chiefly in practice, in those forementioned texts: 1 John v. 3, "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments." 2 John 6, "This is love, that we walk after his commandments." Psal. xxxiv. 11, &c., "Come, ye children, and I will teach you the fear of the Lord: depart from evil, and do good." Such experiences as these Hezekiah took comfort in, chiefly on his sick bed, when he said, "Remember, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart." And such experiences as these, the Psalmist chiefly insists upon, in the 119th Psalm, and elsewhere.

Such experiences as these the Apostle Paul mainly insists upon, when he speaks of his experiences in his epistles; as, Rom. i. 9, "God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son." 2 Cor. i. 12, "For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that—by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world." Chap. iv. 13, "We, having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I have believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak." Chap. v. 7, "We walk by faith, not by sight." Ver. 14, "The love of Christ constraineth us." Chap. vi. 4—7, "In all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in labors, in watchings, in fastings. By pureness, by knowledge, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned; by the power of God." Gal. ii. 20, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life, which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God." Phil. iii. 7, 8, "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ." Col. i. 29, "Whereunto I also labor, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily." 1 Thess. ii. 2, "We were bold in our God, to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention." Ver. 8, 9, 10, "Being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us. For ye remember, brethren, our labor and travel, laboring night and day. Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblamably, we behaved ourselves among you." And such experiences as these they were, that this blessed apostle chiefly comforted himself in the consideration of, when he was going to martyrdom: 2 Tim. iv. 6, 7, "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."

And not only does the most important and distinguishing part of Christian experience lie in spiritual practice; but such is the nature of that sort of exercises of grace, wherein spiritual practice consists, that nothing is so properly called by the name of experimental religion. For, that experience, which is in these exercises of grace, that are found and prove effectual at the very point of trial, wherein God proves, which we will actually cleave to, whether Christ or our lusts, is, as has been shown already, the proper experiment of the truth and power of our godliness; wherein its victorious power and efficacy, in producing its proper effect, and reaching its end, is found by experience. This is properly Christian experience, wherein the saints have opportunity to see, by actual ex-

perience and trial, whether they have a heart to do the will of God, and to forsake other things for Christ, or no. As that is called experimental philosophy which brings opinions and notions to the test of fact, so is that properly called experimental religion, which brings religious affections and intentions to the like test.

There is a sort of external religious practice, wherein is no inward experience, which no account is made of in the sight of God, but it is esteemed good for nothing. And there is what is called experience, that is without practice, being neither accompanied nor followed with a Christian behavior; and this is worse than nothing. Many persons seem to have very wrong notions of Christian experience and spiritual light and discoveries. Whenever a person finds within him a heart to treat God as God, at the time that he has the trial, and finds his disposition effectual in the experiment, that is the most proper, and most distinguishing experience. And to have, at such a time, that sense of divine things, that apprehension of the truth, importance and excellency of the things of religion, which then sways and prevails, and governs his heart and hands; this is the most excellent spiritual light, and these are the most distinguishing discoveries. Religion consists much in holy affection; but those exercises of affection which are most distinguishing of true religion, are these practical exercises. Friendship between earthly friends consists much in affection; but yet, those strong exercises of affection, that actually carry them through fire and water for each other, are the highest evidences of true friendship.

There is nothing in what has been said, contrary to what is asserted by some sound divines; when they say, that there are no sure evidences of grace, but the acts of grace. For that doth not hinder, but that these operative, productive acts, those exercises of grace that are effectual in practice, may be the highest evidences above all other kinds of acts of grace. Nor does it hinder, but that, when there are many of these acts and exercises, following one another in a course, under various trials of every kind, the evidence is still heightened; as one act confirms another. A man, once by seeing his neighbor, may have good evidence of his presence; but by seeing him from day to day, and conversing with him in a course, in various circumstances, the evidence is established. The disciples when they first saw Christ, after his resurrection, had good evidence that he was alive; but, by conversing with him for forty days, and his showing himself to them alive by many infallible proofs, they had yet higher evidence.*

The witness or seal of the Spirit that we read of, doubtless consists in the effect of the Spirit of God on the heart, in the implantation and exercises of grace there, and so consists in experience. And it is also beyond doubt, that this seal of the Spirit, is the highest kind of evidence of the saints' adoption, that ever they obtain. But in these exercises of grace in practice, that have been spoken of, God gives witness, and sets to his seal, in the most conspicuous, eminent,

* "The more these visible exercises of grace are renewed, the more certain you will be. The more frequently these actings are renewed, the more abiding and confirmed your assurance will be. A man that has been assured of such visible exercises of grace, may quickly after be in doubt whether he was not mistaken. But when such actings are renewed again and again, he grows more settled and established about his good estate. If a man see a thing once, that makes him sure; but, if afterwards, he fear he was deceived, when he comes to see it again, he is more sure he was not mistaken. If a man read such passages in a book, he is sure it is so. Some months after, some may bear him down, that he was mistaken, so as to make him question it himself; but, when he looks, and reads it again, he is abundantly confirmed. The more men's grace is multiplied, the more their peace is multiplied:" 2 Pet. i. 2, "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you, through the knowledge of God, and Jesus our Lord." *Stoddard's Way to know Sincerity and Hypocrisy.*

and evident manner. It has been abundantly found to be true in fact, by the experience of the Christian church, that Christ commonly gives, by his Spirit, the greatest and most joyful evidences to his saints of their sonship, in those effectual exercises of grace under trials, which have been spoken of; as is manifest in the full assurance, and unspeakable joys of many of the martyrs. Agreeable to that, 1 Pet. iv. 14, "If ye are reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory, and of God resteth upon you." And that in Rom. v. 2, 3, "We rejoice in hope of the glory of God, and glory in tribulations." And agreeable to what the Apostle Paul often declares of what he experienced in his trials. And when the Apostle Peter, in my text, speaks of the joy unspeakable, and full of glory, which the Christians to whom he wrote, experienced; he has respect to what they found under persecution, as appears by the context. Christ's thus manifesting himself, as the friend and saviour of his saints, cleaving to him under trials seems to have been represented of old, by his coming and manifesting himself, to Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, in the furnace. And when the apostle speaks of the witness of the Spirit, in Rom. viii. 15, 16, 17, he has a more immediate respect to what the Christians experienced, in their exercises of love to God, in suffering persecution; as is plain by the context. He is, in the foregoing verses, encouraging the Christian Romans under their sufferings, that though their bodies be dead, because of sin, yet they should be raised to life again. But it is more especially plain by the verse immediately following, verse 18, "For I reckon, that the sufferings of this present time, are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." So the apostle has evidently respect to their persecutions, in all that he says to the end of the chapter. So when the apostle speaks of the earnest of the Spirit, which God had given to him, in 2 Cor. v. 5, the context shows plainly that he has respect to what was given him in his great trials and sufferings. And in that promise of the white stone and new name, to him that overcomes, Rev. ii. 17, it is evident Christ has a special respect to a benefit that Christians should obtain, by overcoming, in the trial they had, in that day of persecution. This appears by verse 13, and many other passages in this epistle, to the seven churches of Asia.

Objection II.—Some also may be ready to object against what has been said of Christian practice being the chief evidence of the truth of grace, that this is a legal doctrine; and that this making practice a thing of such great importance in religion, magnifies works, and tends to lead men to make too much of their own doings, to the diminution of the glory of free grace, and does not seem well to consist with the great gospel doctrine of justification by faith alone.

But this objection is altogether without reason. Which way is it inconsistent with the freeness of God's grace, that holy practice should be a sign of God's grace? It is our works being the price of God's favor, and not their being the sign of it, that is the thing which is inconsistent with the freeness of that favor. Surely the beggar's looking on the money he has in his hands, as a sign of the kindness of him who gave it to him, is in no respect inconsistent with the freeness of that kindness. It is his having money in his hands as the price of a benefit, that is the thing which is inconsistent with the free kindness of the giver. The notion of the freeness of the grace of God to sinners, as that is revealed and taught in the gospel, is not that no holy and amiable qualifications or actions in us shall be a fruit, and so a sign of that grace; but that it is not the worthiness or loveliness of any qualification or action of ours which recommends us to that grace; that kindness is shown to the unworthy and un-

lovely; that there is great excellency in the benefit bestowed, and no excellency in the subject as the price of it; that goodness goes forth and flows out, from the fulness of God's nature, the fulness of the fountain of good, without any amiableness in the the object to draw it. And this is the notion of justification without works (as this doctrine is taught in the Scripture), that it is not the worthiness or loveliness of our works, or any thing in us, which is in any wise accepted with God, as a balance for the guilt of sin, or a recommendation of sinners to his acceptance as heirs of life. Thus we are justified only by the righteousness of Christ, and not by our righteousness. And when works are opposed to faith in this affair, and it is said that we are justified by faith and not by works; thereby is meant, that it is not the worthiness or amiableness of our works, or any thing in us, which recommends us to an interest in Christ and his benefits; but that we have this interest only by faith, or by our souls receiving Christ, or adhering to and closing with him. But that the worthiness or amiableness of nothing in us recommends and brings us to an interest in Christ, is no argument that nothing in us is a sign of an interest in Christ.

If the doctrines of free grace, and justification by faith alone, be inconsistent with the importance of holy practice as a sign of grace; then they are equally inconsistent with the importance of any thing whatsoever in us as a sign of grace, any holiness, or any grace that is in us, or any of our experiences or religion; for it is as contrary to the doctrines of free grace and justification by faith alone, that any of these should be the righteousness which we are justified by, as that holy practice should be so. It is with holy works, as it is with holy qualifications; it is inconsistent with the freeness of gospel grace, that a title to salvation should be given to men for the loveliness of any of their holy qualifications, as much as that it should be given for the holiness of their works. It is inconsistent with the gospel doctrine of free grace, that an interest in Christ and his benefits should be given for the loveliness of a man's true holiness, for the amiableness of his renewed, sanctified, heavenly heart, his love to God, and being like God, or his experience of joy in the Holy Ghost, self-emptiness, a spirit to exalt Christ above all, and to give all glory to him, and a heart devoted unto him; I say it is inconsistent with the gospel doctrine of free grace, that a title to Christ's benefits should be given out of regard to the loveliness of any of these, or that any of these should be our righteousness in the affair of justification. And yet this does not hinder the importance of these things as evidences of an interest in Christ. Just so it is with respect to holy actions and works. To make light of works, because we be not justified by works, is the same thing in effect, as to make light of all religion, all grace and holiness, yea, true evangelical holiness, and all gracious experience; for all is included, when the Scripture says, we are not justified by works; for by works in this case, is meant all our own righteousness, religion, or holiness, and every thing that is in us, all the good we do, and all the good which we are conscious of, all external acts, and all internal acts and exercises of grace, and all experiences, and all those holy and heavenly things wherein the life and power, and the very essence of religion do consist, all those great things which Christ and his apostles mainly insisted on in their preaching, and endeavored to promote, as of the greatest consequence in the hearts and lives of men, and all good dispositions, exercises and qualifications of every kind whatsoever; and even faith itself, considered as a part of our holiness. For we are justified by none of these things; and if we were, we should, in a Scripture sense, be justified by works. And therefore if it be not legal, and contrary to the evangelical doctrine of justification without works, to insist on any of these, as of great importance, as evidences of an interest in

Christ; then no more is it, thus to insist on the importance of holy practice. It would be legal to suppose, that holy practice justifies by bringing us to a title to Christ's benefits, as the price of it, or as recommending to it by its preciousness or excellence; but it is not legal to suppose, that holy practice justifies the sincerity of a believer, as the proper evidence of it. The Apostle James did not think it legal to say, that Abraham our father was justified by works in this sense. The Spirit that indited the Scripture, did not think the great importance and absolute necessity of holy practice, in this respect, to be inconsistent with the freeness of grace; for it commonly teaches them both together; as in Rev. xxi. 6, 7, God says, "I will give unto him that is athirst, of the fountain of the water of life freely;" and then adds, in the very next words, "he that overcometh shall inherit all things." As though behaving well in the Christian race and warfare, were the condition of the promise. So in the next chapter, in the 14th and 15th verses, Christ says, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life, and enter in through the gates into the city;" and then declares in the 15th verse, "how they that are of a wicked practice" shall be excluded; and yet in the two verses next following, does with very great solemnity give forth an invitation to all to come and take of the water of life freely: "I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say, come. And let him that heareth, say, come. And let him that is athirst, come; and whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely." So chapter iii. 20, 21, "Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me." But then it is added in the next words, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne." And in that great invitation of Christ, Matt. xi. latter end, "Come unto me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;" Christ adds in the next words, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls; for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light:" as though taking the burden of Christ's service, and imitating his example, were necessary in order to the promised rest. So in that great invitation to sinners to accept of free grace, Isa. lv., "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat, yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price;" even there, in the continuation of the same invitation, the sinner's forsaking his wicked practice is spoken of as necessary to the obtaining mercy: verse 7, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." So the riches of divine grace, in the justification of sinners, is set forth with the necessity of holy practice, Isa. i. 16, &c.: "Wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to do evil, learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

And in that most solemn invitation of wisdom, Prov. ix., after it is represented what great provision is made, and how that all things were ready, the house built, the beasts killed, the wine mingled, and the table furnished, and the messengers sent forth to invite the guests; then we have the free invitation, verses 4, 5, 6: "Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither; as for him that wanteth understanding (i. e. has no righteousness) she saith to him, Come, eat of my

bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled." But then in the next breath it follows, "Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding;" as though forsaking sin, and going in the way of holiness, were necessary in order to life. So that the freeness of grace, and the necessity of holy practice, which are thus from time to time joined together in Scripture, are not inconsistent one with another. Nor does it at all diminish the honor and importance of faith, that the exercises and effects of faith in practice, should be esteemed the chief signs of it; any more than it lessens the importance of life, that action and motion are esteemed the chief signs of that.

So that in what has been said of the importance of holy practice as the main sign of sincerity; there is nothing legal, nothing derogatory to the freedom and sovereignty of gospel grace, nothing in the least clashing with the gospel doctrine of justification by faith alone, without the works of the law, nothing in the least tending to lessen the glory of the Mediator, and our dependence on his righteousness, nothing infringing on the special prerogatives of faith in the affair of our salvation, nothing in any wise detracting from the glory of God and his mercy, or exalting man, or diminishing his dependence and obligation. So that if any are against such an importance of holy practice as has been spoken of, it must be only from a senseless aversion to the letters and sound of the word *works*, when there is no reason in the world to be given for it, but what may be given with equal force, why they should have an aversion to the words *holiness, godliness, grace, religion, experience*, and even *faith* itself; for to make a righteousness of any of these, is as legal, and as inconsistent with the way of the new covenant, as to make a righteousness of holy practice.

It is greatly to the hurt of religion, for persons to make light of, and insist little on, those things which the Scripture insists most upon, as of most importance in the evidence of our interest in Christ, under a notion that to lay weight on these things is legal, and an old covenant way; and so, to neglect the exercises, and effectual operations of grace in practice, and insist almost wholly on discoveries, and the method and manner of the immanent exercises of conscience and grace in contemplation; depending on an ability to make nice distinctions in these matters, and a faculty of accurate discerning in them, from philosophy or experience. It is in vain to seek for any better, or any further signs than those that the Scriptures have most expressly mentioned, and most frequently insisted on, as signs of godliness. They who pretend to a greater accuracy in giving signs, or by their extraordinary experience or insight into the nature of things, to give more distinguishing marks, which shall more thoroughly search out and detect the hypocrite, are but subtil to darken their own minds, and the minds of others; their refinings and nice discerning, are in God's sight, but refined foolishness and a sagacious delusion. Here are applicable those words of Agur, Prov. xxx. 5, 6, "Every word of God is pure; he is a shield to them that put their trust in him: add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar." Our discerning, with regard to the hearts of men, is not much to be trusted. We can see but a little way into the nature of the soul, and the depths of man's heart. The ways are so many whereby persons' affections may be moved without any supernatural influence, the natural springs of the affections are so various and so secret, so many things have oftentimes a joint influence on the affections, the imagination, and that in ways innumerable and unsearchable, natural temper, education, the common influences of the Spirit of God, a surprising concourse of affecting circumstances, an extraordinary coincidence of things in the course of men's thoughts, together with the subtil management of invisible malicious spirits, that no philosophy or experience will

ever be sufficient to guide us safely through this labyrinth and maze, without our closely following the clew which God has given us in his word. God knows his own reasons why he insists on some things, and plainly sets them forth as the things that we should try ourselves by rather than others. It may be it is because he knows that these things are attended with less perplexity, and that we are less liable to be deceived by them than others. He best knows our nature; and he knows the nature and manner of his own operations; and he best knows the way of our safety; he knows what allowances to make for different states of his church, and different tempers of particular persons, and varieties in the manner of his own operations, how far nature may resemble grace, and how far nature may be mixed with grace, what affections may rise from imagination, and how far imagination may be mixed with spiritual illumination. And therefore it is our wisdom, not to take his work out of his hands, but to follow him, and lay the stress of the judgment of ourselves there, where he has directed us. If we do otherwise, no wonder if we are bewildered, confounded, and fatally deluded. But if we had got into the way of looking chiefly at those things, which Christ and his apostles and prophets chiefly insisted on, and so in judging of ourselves and others, chiefly regarding practical exercises and effects of grace, not neglecting other things; it would be of manifold happy consequence; it would above all things tend to the conviction of deluded hypocrites, and to prevent the delusion of those whose hearts were never brought to a thorough compliance with the straight and narrow way which leads to life; it would tend to deliver us from innumerable perplexities, arising from the various inconsistent schemes there are about methods and steps of experience; it would greatly tend to prevent professors neglecting strictness of life, and tend to promote their engagedness and earnestness in their Christian walk; and it would become fashionable for men to show their Christianity, more by an amiable distinguished behavior, than by an abundant and excessive declaring their experiences; and we should get into the way of appearing lively in religion, more by being lively in the service of God and our generation, than by the liveliness and forwardness of our tongues, and making a business of proclaiming on the house tops, with our mouths, the holy and eminent acts and exercises of our own hearts; and Christians that are intimate friends, would talk together of their experiences and comforts, in a manner better becoming Christian humility and modesty, and more to each other's profit: their tongues not running before, but rather going behind their hands and feet, after the prudent example of the blessed apostle, 2 Cor. xii. 6, and many occasions of spiritual pride would be cut off; and so a great door shut against the devil; and a great many of the main stumbling-blocks against experimental and powerful religion would be removed; and religion would be declared and manifested in such a way that, instead of hardening spectators, and exceedingly promoting infidelity and atheism, would, above all things, tend to convince men that there is a reality in religion, and greatly awaken them, and win them, by convincing their consciences of the importance and excellency of religion. Thus the light of professors would so shine before men, that others, seeing their good works, would glorify their Father which is in heaven.

NARRATIVE

OF

SURPRISING CONVERSIONS.

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TO THE REV. DR. COLMAN.

Rev. and Honored Sir,

Having seen your letter to my honored uncle Williams, of Hatfield, of July 20, wherein you inform him of the notice that has been taken of the late wonderful work of God in this, and some other towns in this county, by the Rev. Dr. Watts and Dr. Guyse of London, and the congregation to which the last of these preached on a monthly day of solemn prayer; as also of your desire to be more perfectly acquainted with it, by some of us on the spot: and having been since informed by my uncle Williams, that you desire me to undertake it; I would now do it in as just and faithful a manner as in me lies.

The people of the county in general, I suppose are as sober, and orderly, and good sort of people, as in any part of New England; and I believe they have been preserved the freest by far, of any part of the country from error and variety of sects and opinions. Our being so far within the land, at a distance from seaports, and in a corner of the country, has doubtless been one reason why we have not been so much corrupted with vice, as most other parts. But without question the religion, and good order of the country, and their purity in doctrine, has, under God, been very much owing to the great abilities, and eminent piety, of my venerable and honored grandfather Stoddard. I suppose we have been the freest of any part of the land from unhappy divisions, and quarrels in our ecclesiastical and religious affairs, till the late lamentable Springfield contention.*

We being much separated from other parts of the province, and having comparatively but little intercourse with them, have from the beginning, till now, always managed our ecclesiastical affairs within ourselves; it is the way in which the country, from its infancy, has gone on by the practical agreement of all, and the way in which our peace and good order has hitherto been maintained.

The town of Northampton is of about eighty-two years standing, and has now about two hundred families; which mostly dwell more compactly together than any town of such a bigness in these parts of the country; which probably has been an occasion that both our corruptions and reformations have been from time to time, the more swiftly propagated, from one to another, through the town. Take the town in general, and so far as I can judge, they are as

* The Springfield contention relates to the settlement of a Minister there, which occasioned too warm debates between some, both pastors and people that were for it, and others that were against it, on account of their different apprehensions about his principles, and about some steps that were taken to procure his ordination.

rational and understanding a people as most I have been acquainted with: many of them have been noted for religion, and particularly, have been remarkable for their distinct knowledge in things that relate to heart religion, and Christian experience, and their great regards thereto.

I am the third minister that has been settled in the town: the Rev. Mr. Eleazar Mather, who was the first, was ordained in July, 1669. He was one whose heart was much in his work, abundant in labors for the good of precious souls; he had the high esteem and great love of his people, and was blessed with no small success. The Rev. Mr. Stoddard, who succeeded him, came first to the town the November after his death, but was not ordained till September 11, 1672, and died February 11, 1728—9. So that he continued in the work of the ministry here from his first coming to town, near sixty years. And as he was eminent and renowned for his gifts and grace; so he was blessed, from the beginning, with extraordinary success in his ministry, in the conversion of many souls. He had five harvests as he called them: the first was about fifty-seven years ago; the second about fifty-three years; the third about forty; the fourth about twenty-four; the fifth and last about eighteen years ago. Some of these times were much more remarkable than others, and the ingathering of souls more plentiful. Those that were about fifty-three, and forty, and twenty-four years ago, were much greater than either the first or the last: but in each of them, I have heard my grandfather say, the greater part of the young people in the town, seemed to be mainly concerned for their eternal salvation.

After the last of these, came a far more degenerate time (at least among young people), I suppose, than ever before. Mr. Stoddard, indeed, had the comfort before he died, of seeing a time when there was no small appearance of a divine work amongst some, and a considerable ingathering of souls, even after I was settled with him in the ministry, which was about two years before his death; and I have reason to bless God for the great advantage I had by it. In these two years there were near twenty that Mr. Stoddard hoped to be savingly converted; but there was nothing of any general awakening. The greater part seemed to be at that time very insensible of the things of religion, and engaged in other cares and pursuits. Just after my grandfather's death, it seemed to be a time of extraordinary dullness in religion: licentiousness for some years greatly prevailed among the youth of the town; they were many of them very much addicted to night walking, and frequenting the tavern, and lewd practices, wherein some by their example exceedingly corrupted others. It was their manner very frequently to get together in conventions of both sexes, for mirth and jollity, which they called frolicks; and they would often spend the greater part of the night in them, without any regard to order in the families they belonged to: and indeed family government did too much fail in the town. It was become very customary with many of our young people to be indecent in their carriage at meeting, which doubtless would not have prevailed to such a degree, had it not been that my grandfather, through his great age (though he retained his powers surprisingly to the last), was not so able to observe them. There had also long prevailed in the town a spirit of contention between two parties, into which they had for many years been divided, by which was maintained a jealousy one of the other, and they were prepared to oppose one another in all public affairs.

But in two or three years after Mr. Stoddard's death, there began to be a sensible amendment of these evils; the young people showed more of a disposition to hearken to counsel, and by degrees left off their frolicking, and grew observably

more decent in their attendance on the public worship, and there were more that manifested a religious concern than there used to be.

At the latter end of the year 1733, there appeared a very unusual flexibleness, and yielding to advice, in our young people. It had been too long their manner to make the evening after the Sabbath,* and after our public lecture, to be especially the times of their mirth, and company keeping. But a sermon was now preached on the Sabbath before the lecture, to show the evil tendency of the practice, and to persuade them to reform it; and it was urged on heads of families, that it should be a thing agreed upon among them, to govern their families, and keep their children at home, at these times;—and withal it was more privately moved, that they should meet together the next day, in their several neighborhoods, to know each other's minds: which was accordingly done, and the motion complied with throughout the town. But parents found little or no occasion for the exercise of government in the case; the young people declared themselves convinced by what they had heard from the pulpit, and were willing of themselves to comply with the counsel that had been given: and it was immediately, and, I suppose, almost universally complied with; and there was a thorough reformation of these disorders thenceforward, which has continued ever since.

Presently after this, there began to appear a remarkable religious concern at a little village belonging to the congregation, called Pascommuck, where a few families were settled, at about three miles distance from the main body of the town. At this place a number of persons seemed to be savingly wrought upon. In the April following, anno 1734, there happened a very sudden and awful death of a young man in the bloom of his youth; who being violently seized with a pleurisy, and taken immediately very delirious, died in about two days; which (together with what was preached publicly on that occasion) much affected many young people. This was followed with another death of a young married woman, who had been considerably exercised in mind, about the salvation of her soul, before she was ill, and was in great distress, in the beginning of her illness; but seemed to have satisfying evidences of God's saving mercy to her, before her death; so that she died very full of comfort, in a most earnest and moving manner, warning and counselling others. This seemed much to contribute to the solemnizing of the spirits of many young persons; and there began evidently to appear more of a religious concern on people's minds.

In the fall of the year, I proposed it to the young people, that they should agree among themselves to spend the evenings after lectures, in social religion, and to that end to divide themselves into several companies to meet in various parts of the town; which was accordingly done, and those meetings have been since continued, and the example imitated by elder people. This was followed with the death of an elderly person, which was attended with many unusual circumstances, by which many were much moved and affected.

About this time began the great noise that was in this part of the country, about Arminianism, which seemed to appear with a very threatening aspect upon the interest of religion here. The friends of vital piety trembled for fear of the issue; but it seemed, contrary to their fear, strongly to be overruled for the promoting of religion. Many who looked on themselves as in a Christless condition seemed to be awakened by it, with fear that God was about to withdraw from the land, and that we should be given up to heterodoxy, and corrupt

* It must be noted, that it has never been our manner to observe the evening that follows the Sabbath, but that which precedes it, as part of holy time.

principles, and that then their opportunity for obtaining salvation would be past; and many who were brought a little to doubt about the truth of the doctrines they had hitherto been taught, seemed to have a kind of a trembling fear with their doubts, lest they should be led into by-paths, to their eternal undoing: and they seemed with much concern and engagedness of mind to inquire what was indeed the way in which they must come to be accepted with God. There were then some things said publicly on that occasion, concerning justification by faith alone.

Although great fault was found with meddling with the controversy in the pulpit, by such a person, at that time, and though it was ridiculed by many elsewhere; yet it proved a word spoken in season here; and was most evidently attended with a very remarkable blessing of heaven to the souls of the people in this town. They received thence a general satisfaction with respect to the main thing in question, which they had in trembling doubts and concern about; and their minds were engaged the more earnestly to seek that they might come to be accepted of God, and saved in the way of the gospel, which had been made evident to them to be the true and only way. And then it was, in the latter part of December, that the Spirit of God began extraordinarily to set in, and wonderfully to work amongst us; and there were, very suddenly, one after another, five or six persons, who were, to all appearance, savingly converted, and some of them wrought upon in a very remarkable manner.

Particularly, I was surprised with the relation of a young woman, who had been one of the greatest company keepers in the whole town: when she came to me, I had never heard that she was become in any wise serious, but by the conversation I then had with her, it appeared to me, that what she gave an account of, was a glorious work of God's infinite power and sovereign grace; and that God had given her a new heart, truly broken and sanctified. I could not then doubt of it, and have seen much in my acquaintance with her since to confirm it.

Though the work was glorious, yet I was filled with concern about the effect it might have upon others: I was ready to conclude (though too rashly) that some would be hardened by it, in carelessness and looseness of life; and would take occasion from it to open their mouths, in reproaches of religion. But the event was the reverse, to a wonderful degree; God made it, I suppose, the greatest occasion of awakening to others, of any thing that ever came to pass in the town. I have had abundant opportunity to know the effect it had, by my private conversation with many. The news of it seemed to be almost like a flash of lightning, upon the hearts of young people, all over the town, and upon many others. Those persons amongst us, who used to be farthest from seriousness, and that I most feared would make an ill improvement of it, seemed greatly to be awakened with it; many went to talk with her, concerning what she had met with; and what appeared in her seemed to be to the satisfaction of all that did so.

Presently upon this, a great and earnest concern about the great things of religion, and the eternal world, became universal in all parts of the town, and among persons of all degrees, and all ages; the noise amongst the dry bones waxed louder and louder: all other talk but about spiritual and eternal things was soon thrown by; all the conversation in all companies, and upon all occasions, was upon these things only, unless so much as was necessary for people carrying on their ordinary secular business. Other discourse than of the things of religion, would scarcely be tolerated in any company. The minds of people were wonderfully taken off from the world; it was treated amongst us

as a thing of very little consequence: they seem to follow their worldly business, more as a part of their duty, than from any disposition they had to it; the temptation now seemed to lie on that hand, to neglect worldly affairs too much, and to spend too much time in the immediate exercise of religion: which thing was exceedingly misrepresented by reports that were spread in distant parts of the land, as though the people here had wholly thrown by all worldly business, and betook themselves entirely to reading and praying, and such like religious exercises.

But though the people did not ordinarily neglect their worldly business, yet there then was the reverse of what commonly is: religion was with all sorts the great concern, and the world was a thing only by the by. The only thing in their view was to get the kingdom of heaven, and every one appeared pressing into it: the engagedness of their hearts in this great concern could not be hid; it appeared in their very countenances. It then was a dreadful thing amongst us to lie out of Christ, in danger every day of dropping into hell; and what persons' minds were intent upon was to escape for their lives, and to *fly from the wrath to come.* All would eagerly lay hold of opportunities for their souls; and were wont very often to meet together in private houses for religious purposes: and such meetings, when appointed, were wont greatly to be thronged.

There was scarcely a single person in the town, either old or young, that was left unconcerned about the great things of the eternal world. Those that were wont to be the vainest, and loosest, and those that had been most disposed to think and speak slightly of vital and experimental religion, were now generally subject to great awakenings. And the work of conversion was carried on in a most astonishing manner, and increased more and more; souls did, as it were, come by flocks to Jesus Christ. From day to day, for many months together, might be seen evident instances of sinners brought *out of darkness into marvellous light*, and delivered *out of a horrible pit, and from the miry clay, and set upon a rock*, with a *new song of praise to God in their mouths.*

This work of God, as it was carried on, and the number of true saints multiplied, soon made a glorious alteration in the town; so that in the spring and summer following, anno 1735, the town seemed to be full of the presence of God: it never was so full of love, nor so full of joy; and yet so full of distress as it was then. There were remarkable tokens of God's presence in almost every house. It was a time of joy in families on the account of salvation's being brought unto them; parents rejoicing over their children as new born, and husbands over their wives, and wives over their husbands. *The goings of God were then seen in his sanctuary, God's day was a delight, and his tabernacles were amiable.* Our public assemblies were then beautiful; the congregation was alive in God's service, every one earnestly intent on the public worship, every hearer eager to drink in the words of the minister as they came from his mouth; the assembly in general were, from time to time, in tears while the word was preached; some weeping with sorrow and distress, others with joy and love, others with pity and concern for the souls of their neighbors.

Our public praises were then greatly enlivened; God was then served in our psalmody, in some measure, in the beauty of holiness. It has been observable, that there has been scarce any part of divine worship, wherein good men amongst us have had grace so drawn forth, and their hearts so lifted up in the ways of God, as in singing his praises: our congregation excelled all that ever I knew in the external part of the duty before, the men generally carrying regularly, and well, three parts of music, and the women a part by themselves

but now they were evidently wont to sing with unusual elevation of heart and voice, which made the duty pleasant indeed.

In all companies, on other days, on whatever occasions persons met together, Christ was to be heard of, and seen in the midst of them. Our young people, when they met, were wont to spend the time in talking of the excellency and dying love of Jesus Christ, the gloriousness of the way of salvation, the wonderful, free, and sovereign grace of God, his glorious work in the conversion of a soul, the truth and certainty of the great things of God's word, the sweetness of the views of his perfections, &c. And even at weddings, which formerly were merely occasions of mirth and jollity, there was now no discourse of any thing but the things of religion, and no appearance of any but spiritual mirth.

Those amongst us that had been formerly converted, were greatly enlivened and renewed with fresh and extraordinary incomes of the Spirit of God; though some much more than others, according to the measure of the gift of Christ: many that before had labored under difficulties about their own state, had now their doubts removed by more satisfying experience, and more clear discoveries of God's love.

When this work of God first appeared, and was so extraordinarily carried on amongst us in the winter, others round about us, seemed not to know what to make of it; and there were many that scoffed at, and ridiculed it; and some compared what we called conversion to certain distempers. But it was very observable of many, that occasionally came amongst us from abroad, with disregardful hearts, that what they saw here cured them of such a temper of mind: strangers were generally surprised to find things so much beyond what they had heard, and were wont to tell others that the state of the town could not be conceived of by those that had not seen it. The notice that was taken of it by the people that came to town on occasion of the court, that sat here in the beginning of March, was very observable. And those that came from the neighborhood to our public lectures, were for the most part remarkably affected. Many that came to town, on one occasion or other, had their consciences smitten, and awakened, and went home with wounded hearts, and with those impressions that never wore off till they had hopefully a saving issue; and those that before had serious thoughts, had their awakenings and convictions greatly increased. And there were many instances of persons that came from abroad, on visits, or on business, that had not been long here before, to all appearance, they were savingly wrought upon, and partook of that shower of divine blessing that God rained down here, and went home rejoicing; till at length the same work began evidently to appear and prevail in several other towns in the county.

In the month of March, the people in South Hadley began to be seized with deep concern about the things of religion; which very soon became universal: and the work of God has been very wonderful there; not much, if any thing, short of what it has been here, in proportion to the bigness of the place. About the same time it began to break forth in the west part of Suffield (where it has also been very great), and it soon spread into all parts of the town. It next appeared at Sunderland, and soon overspread the town; and I believe was for a season, not less remarkable than it was here. About the same time it began to appear in a part of Deerfield, called Green River, and afterwards filled the town, and there has been a glorious work there: it began also to be manifest in the south part of Hatfield, in a place called the Hill, and after that the whole town, in the second week in April, seemed to be seized, as it were at once, with concern about the things of religion: and the work of God has been great there. There has been also a very general awakening at West Springfield, and Long

Meadow; and in Enfield, there was, for a time, a pretty general concern amongst some that before had been very loose persons. About the same time that this appeared at Enfield, the Rev. Mr. Bull of Westfield informed me, that there had been a great alteration there, and that more had been done in one week there than in seven years before.—Something of this work likewise appeared in the first precinct in Springfield, principally in the north and south extremes of the parish. And in Hadley old town, there gradually appeared so much of a work of God on souls, as at another time would have been thought worthy of much notice. For a short time there was also a very great and general concern, of the like nature, at Northfield. And wherever this concern appeared, it seemed not to be in vain: but in every place God brought saving blessings with him, and his word attended with his Spirit (as we have all reason to think) returned not void. It might well be said at that time in all parts of the country, *Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as doves to their windows?*

As what other towns heard of and found in this, was a great means of awakening them; so our hearing of such a swift, and extraordinary propagation, and extent of this work, did doubtless, for a time, serve to uphold the work amongst us. The continual news kept alive the talk of religion, and did greatly quicken and rejoice the hearts of God's people, and much awaken those that looked on themselves as still left behind, and made them the more earnest that they also might share in the great blessing that others had obtained.

This remarkable pouring out of the Spirit of God, which thus extended from one end to the other of this country, was not confined to it, but many places in Connecticut have partook in the same mercy: as for instance, the first parish in Windsor, under the pastoral care of the Reverend Mr. Marsh, was thus blest about the same time, as we in Northampton, while we had no knowledge of each other's circumstances: there has been a very great ingathering of souls to Christ in that place, and something considerable of the same work began afterwards in East Windsor, my honored father's parish, which has in times past been a place favored with mercies of this nature, above any on this western side of New England, excepting Northampton; there having been four or five seasons of the pouring out of the Spirit to the general awakening of the people there, since my father's settlement amongst them.

There was also the last spring and summer a wonderful work of God carried on at Coventry, under the ministry of the Reverend Mr. Meacham: I had opportunity to converse with some of the Coventry people, who gave me a very remarkable account of the surprising change that appeared in the most rude and vicious persons there. The like was also very great at the same time in a part of Lebanon, called the Crank, where the Reverend Mr. Wheelock, a young gentleman, is lately settled: and there has been much of the same at Durham, under the ministry of the Reverend Mr. Chauncey; and to appearance no small ingathering of souls there. And likewise amongst many of the young people in the first precinct in Stratford, under the ministry of the Reverend Mr. Gould; where the work was much promoted by the remarkable conversion of a young woman that had been a great company keeper, as it was here.

Something of this work appeared in several other towns in those parts, as I was informed when I was there the last fall. And we have since been acquainted with something very remarkable of this nature at another parish in Stratford, called Ripton, under the pastoral care of the Rev. Mr. Mills. And there was a considerable revival of religion last summer at New Haven old town, as I was once and again informed by the Rev. Mr. Noyes, the minister there, and by others: and by a letter which I very lately received from Mr.

Noyes, and also by information we have had otherwise. This flourishing of religion still continues, and has lately much increased: Mr. Noyes writes, that many this summer have been added to the church, and particularly mentions several young persons that belonged to the principal families of that town.

There has been a degree of the same work at a part of Guilford; and very considerable at Mansfield, under the ministry of the Rev. Mr. Eleazar Williams; and an unusual religious concern at Tolland; and something of it at Hebron, and Bolton. There was also no small effusion of the Spirit of God in the north parish in Preston in the eastern part of Connecticut, which I was informed of, and saw something of it when I was the last autumn at the house, and in the congregation of the Rev. Mr. Lord, the minister there; who with the Rev. Mr. Owen of Groton, came up hither in May, the last year, on purpose to see the work of God here; and having heard various and contradictory accounts of it, were careful when they were here to inform and satisfy themselves; and to that end particularly conversed with many of our people; which they declared to be entirely to their satisfaction; and that the one half had not been told them, nor could be told them. Mr. Lord told me, that, when he got home, he informed his congregation of what he had seen, and that they were greatly affected with it, and that it proved the beginning of the same work amongst them, which prevailed till there was a general awakening, and many instances of persons, who seemed to be remarkably converted. I also have lately heard that there has been something of the same work at Woodbury.

But this shower of Divine blessing has been yet more extensive: there was no small degree of it in some parts of the Jerseys; as I was informed when I was at New-York (in a long journey I took at that time of the year for my health), by some people of the Jerseys, whom I saw: especially the Rev. Mr. William Tennent, a minister, who seemed to have such things much at heart, told me of a very great awakening of many in a place called the Mountains under the ministry of one Mr. Cross; and of a very considerable revival of religion in another place under the ministry of his brother the Rev. Mr. Gilbert Tennent; and also at another place, under the ministry of a very pious young gentleman, a Dutch minister, whose name as I remember, was Freelinghousen.

This seems to have been a very extraordinary dispensation of Providence: God has in many respects, gone out of, and much beyond his usual and ordinary way. The work in this town, and some others about us, has been extraordinary on account of the universality of it, affecting all sorts, sober and vicious, high and low, rich and poor, wise and unwise; it reached the most considerable families and persons to all appearance, as much as others. In former stirrings of this nature, the bulk of the young people have been greatly affected; but old men and little children have been so now. Many of the last have, of their own accord, formed themselves into religious societies, in different parts of the town: a loose careless person could scarcely find a companion in the whole neighborhood; and if there was any one that seemed to remain senseless or unconcerned, it would be spoken of as a strange thing.

This dispensation has also appeared extraordinary in the numbers of those, on whom we have reason to hope it has had a saving effect: we have about six hundred and twenty communicants, which include almost all our adult persons. The church was very large before; but persons never thronged into it, as they did in the late extraordinary time. Our sacraments were eight weeks asunder, and I received into our communion about a hundred before one sacrament, and fourscore of them at one time, whose appearance, when they presented themselves together to make an open, explicit profession of Christianity, was

very affecting to the congregation: I took in near sixty before the next sacrament day: and I had very sufficient evidence of the conversion of their souls, through divine grace, though it is not the custom here, as it is in many other churches in this country, to make a credible relation of their inward experiences, the ground of admission to the Lord's Supper.

I am far from pretending to be able to determine how many have lately been the subjects of such mercy; but if I may be allowed to declare any thing that appears to me probable in a thing of this nature, I hope that more than three hundred souls were savingly brought home to Christ in this town, in the space of half a year (how many more I don't guess), and about the same number of males as females; which, by what I have heard Mr. Stoddard say, was far from what has been usual in years past, for he observed that in his time, many more women were converted than men. Those of our young people that are on other accounts most likely and considerable, are mostly, as I hope, truly pious, and leading persons in the way of religion. Those that were formerly looser young persons, are generally, to all appearance, become true lovers of God and Christ, and spiritual in their dispositions. And I hope that by far the greater part of persons in this town, above sixteen years of age, are such as have the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ; and so by what I heard I suppose it is in some other places, particularly at Sunderland and South Hadley.

This has also appeared to be a very extraordinary dispensation, in that the Spirit of God has so much extended not only his awakening, but regenerating influences, both to elderly persons, and also those that are very young. It has been a thing heretofore rarely heard of, that any were converted past middle age; but now we have the same ground to think that many such have in this time been savingly changed, as that others have been so in more early years. I suppose there were upwards of fifty persons in this town above forty years of age; and more than twenty of them above fifty, and about ten of them above sixty, and two of them above seventy years of age.

It has heretofore been looked on as a strange thing, when any have seemed to be savingly wrought upon, and remarkably changed in their childhood; but now, I suppose, near thirty were to appearance so wrought upon between ten and fourteen years of age, and two between nine and ten, and one of them about four years of age; and because, I suppose, this last will be most difficultly believed, I shall hereafter give a particular account of it. The influences of God's Spirit have also been very remarkable on children in some other places, particularly at Sunderland and South Hadley, and the west part of Suffield. There are several families in this town that are all hopefully pious; yea, there are several numerous families, in which, I think, we have reason to hope that all the children are truly godly, and most of them lately become so: and there are very few houses in the whole town, into which salvation has not lately come, in one or more instances. There are several negroes, that from what was seen in them then, and what is discernible in them since, appear to have been truly born again in the late remarkable season.

God has also seemed to have gone out of his usual way in the quickness of his work, and the swift progress his Spirit has made in his operation, on the hearts of many: 'tis wonderful that persons should be so suddenly, and yet so greatly changed: many have been taken from a loose and careless way of living, and seized with strong convictions of their guilt and misery, and in a very little time old things have passed away, and all things have become new with them.

God's work has also appeared very extraordinary, in the degrees of the in-

fluences of his Spirit, both in the degree of awakening and conviction, and also in a degree of saving light, and love, and joy, that many have experienced. It has also been very extraordinary in the extent of it, and its being so swiftly propagated from town to town. In former times of the pouring out of the Spirit of God on this town, though in some of them it was very remarkable, yet it reached no further than this town, the neighboring towns all around continued unmoved.

The work of God's Spirit seemed to be at its greatest height in this town, in the former part of the spring, in March and April; at which time God's work in the conversion of souls was carried on amongst us in so wonderful a manner, that so far as I, by looking back, can judge from the particular acquaintance I have had with souls in this work, it appears to me probable, to have been at the rate, at least of four persons in a day, or near thirty in a week, take one with another, for five or six weeks together: when God in so remarkable a manner took the work into his own hands, there was as much done in a day or two, as at ordinary times, with all endeavors that men can use, and with such a blessing as we commonly have, is done in a year.

I am very sensible how apt many would be, if they should see the account I have here given, presently to think with themselves that I am very fond of making a great many converts, and of magnifying and aggrandizing the matter; and to think that, for want of judgment, I take every religious pang, and enthusiastic conceit, for saving conversion; and I do not much wonder if they should be apt to think so: and for this reason, I have forborne to publish an account of this great work of God, though I have often been put upon it; but having now as I thought a special call to give an account of it, upon mature consideration I thought it might not be beside my duty to declare this amazing work, as it appeared to me, to be indeed divine, and to conceal no part of the glory of it, leaving it with God to take care of the credit of his own work, and running the venture of any censorious thoughts, which might be entertained of me to my disadvantage. But that distant persons may be under as great advantage as may be, to judge for themselves of this matter, I would be a little more large, and particular.

I therefore proceed to give an account of the manner of persons being wrought upon; and here there is a vast variety, perhaps as manifold as the subjects of the operation; but yet in many things there is a great analogy in all.

Persons are first awakened with a sense of their miserable condition by nature, the danger they are in of perishing eternally, and that it is of great importance to them that they speedily escape, and get into a better state. Those that before were secure and senseless, are made sensible how much they were in the way to ruin in their former courses. Some are more suddenly seized with convictions; it may be, by the news of others' conversion, or something they hear in public, or in private conference, their consciences are suddenly smitten, as if their hearts were pierced through with a dart: others have awakenings that come upon them more gradually; they begin at first to be something more thoughtful and considerate, so as to come to a conclusion in their minds, that it is their best and wisest way to delay no longer, but to improve the present opportunity; and have accordingly set themselves seriously to meditate on those things that have the most awakening tendency, on purpose to obtain convictions; and so their awakenings have increased, till a sense of their misery, by God's Spirit setting in therewith, has had fast hold of them. Others that, before this wonderful time, had been something religious and concerned for their salvation, have been awakened in a new manner, and made sensible that their

slack and dull way of seeking was never like to attain their purpose, and so have been roused up to a greater violence for the kingdom of heaven.

These awakenings when they have first seized on persons, have had two effects: one was, that they have brought them immediately to quit their sinful practices, and the looser sort have been brought to forsake and dread their former vices and extravagancies. When once the Spirit of God began to be so wonderfully poured out in a general way through the town, people had soon done with their old quarrels, backbitings, and intermeddling with other men's matters; the tavern was soon left empty, and persons kept very much at home; none went abroad unless on necessary business, or on some religious account, and every day seemed in many respects like a Sabbath day. And the other effect was, that it put them on earnest application to the means of salvation, reading, prayer, meditation, the ordinances of God's house, and private conference; their cry was, *What shall we do to be saved?* The place of resort was now altered, it was no longer the tavern, but the minister's house; that was thronged far more than ever the tavern had been wont to be.

There is a very great variety, as to the degree of fear and trouble that persons are exercised with, before they obtain any comfortable evidences of pardon and acceptance with God: some are from the beginning carried on with abundantly more encouragement and hope, than others: some have had ten times less trouble of mind than others, in whom yet the issue seems to be the same. Some have had such a sense of the displeasure of God, and the great danger they were in of damnation, that they could not sleep at nights; and many have said that when they have laid down, the thoughts of sleeping in such a condition have been frightful to them, and they have scarcely been free from terrror while they have been asleep, and they have awaked with fear, heaviness, and distress still abiding on their spirits. It has been very common, that the deep and fixed concern that has been on persons' minds, has had a painful influence on their bodies, and given disturbance to animal nature.

The awful apprehensions persons have had of their misery, have for the most part been increasing, the nearer they have approached to deliverance; though they often pass through many changes, and alterations in the frame and circumstances of their minds: sometimes they think themselves wholly senseless, and fear that the Spirit of God has left them, and that they are given up to judicial hardness; yet they appear very deeply exercised about that fear, and are in great earnest to obtain convictions again.

Together with those fears, and that exercise of mind which is rational, and which they have just ground for, they have often suffered many needless distresses of thought, in which Satan probably has a great hand, to entangle them, and block up their way; and sometimes the distemper of melancholy has been evidently mixed; of which, when it happens, the tempter seems to make great advantage, and puts an unhappy bar in the way of any good effect: one knows not how to deal with such persons; they turn every thing that is said to them the wrong way, and most to their own disadvantage: and there is nothing that the devil seems to make so great a handle of, as a melancholy humor, unless it be the real corruption of the heart.

But it has been very remarkable, that there has been far less of this mixture in this time of extraordinary blessing, than there was wont to be in persons under awakenings at other times; for it is evident that many that before had been exceedingly involved in such difficulties, seemed now strangely to be set at liberty: some persons that had before for a long time, being exceedingly entangled with peculiar temptations, of one sort or other, and unprofitable

and hurtful distresses, were soon helped over former stumbling-blocks, that hindered any progress towards saving good; and convictions have wrought more kindly, and they have been successfully carried on in the way to life. And thus Satan seemed to be restrained, till towards the latter end of this wonderful time, when God's Spirit was about to withdraw.

Many times persons under great awakenings were concerned, because they thought they were not awakened, but miserable, hard-hearted, senseless, sottish creatures still, and sleeping upon the brink of hell: the sense of the need they have to be awakened, and of their comparative hardness, grows upon them with their awakenings; so that they seem to themselves to be very senseless, when indeed most sensible. There have been some instances of persons that have had as great a sense of their danger and misery, as their natures could well subsist under, so that a little more would probably have destroyed them; and yet they have expressed themselves much amazed at their own insensibility and sottishness, in such an extraordinary time as it then was.

Persons are sometimes brought to the borders of despair, and it looks as black as midnight to them a little before the day dawns in their souls; some few instances there have been of persons, who have had such a sense of God's wrath for sin, that they have been overborne, and made to cry out under an astonishing sense of their guilt, wondering that God suffers such guilty wretches to live upon earth, and that he doth not immediately send them to hell; and sometimes their guilt does so glare them in the face, that they are in exceeding terror for fear that God will instantly do it; but more commonly the distresses under legal awakenings have not been to such a degree. In some these terrors do not seem to be so sharp, when near comfort, as before; their convictions have not seemed to work so much that way, but they seem to be led further down into their own hearts, to a further sense of their own universal depravity, and deadness in sin.

The corruption of the heart has discovered itself in various exercises in the time of legal convictions; sometimes it appears in a great struggle, like something roused by an enemy, and Satan the old inhabitant seems to exert himself, like a serpent disturbed and enraged. Many in such circumstances, have felt a great spirit of envy, towards the godly, especially towards those that are thought to have been lately converted, and most of all towards acquaintances and companions, when they are thought to be converted: indeed some have felt many heart-risings against God, and murmurings at his ways of dealing with mankind, and his dealings with themselves in particular. It has been much insisted on, both in public and private, that persons should have the utmost dread of such envious thoughts, which, if allowed, tend exceedingly to quench the Spirit of God, if not to provoke him finally to forsake them. And when such a spirit has much prevailed, and persons have not so earnestly strove against it as they ought to have done, it has seemed to be exceedingly to the hinderance of the good of their souls: but in some other instances, where persons have been much terrified at the sight of such wickedness in their hearts, God has brought good to them out of evil: and made it a means of convincing them of their own desperate sinfulness, and bringing them off from all self-confidence.

The drift of the Spirit of God in his legal strivings with persons, has seemed most evidently to be, to make way for, and to bring to, a conviction of their absolute dependence on his sovereign power and grace, and universal necessity of a Mediator, by leading them more and more to a sense of their exceeding wickedness, and guiltiness in his sight; the pollution, and insufficiency of their own righteousness, that they can in no wise help themselves, and that God would be

wholly just and righteous in rejecting them, and all that they do, and in casting them off for ever; though there be a vast variety, as to the manner, and distinctness of persons' convictions of these things.

As they are gradually more and more convinced of the corruption and wickedness of their hearts, they seem to themselves to grow worse and worse, harder and blinder, and more desperately wicked, instead of growing better: they are ready to be discouraged by it, and oftentimes never think themselves so far off from good, as when they are nearest. Under the sense which the Spirit of God gives them of their sinfulness, they often think that they differ from all others; their hearts are ready to sink with the thought, that they are the worst of all, and that none ever obtained mercy that were so wicked as they.

When awakenings first begin, their consciences are commonly most exercised about their outward vicious course, or other acts of sin; but afterwards, are much more burdened with a sense of heart sins, the dreadful corruption of their nature, their enmity against God, the pride of their hearts, their unbelief, their rejection of Christ, the stubborness and obstinacy of their wills; and the like. In many, God makes much use of their own experience, in the course of their awakenings and endeavors after saving good, to convince them of their own vile emptiness and universal depravity.

Very often under first awakenings, when they are brought to reflect on the sin of their past lives, and have something of a terrifying sense of God's anger, they set themselves to walk more strictly, and confess their sins, and perform many religious duties, with a secret hope of appeasing God's anger, and making up for the sins they have committed: and oftentimes, at first setting out, their affections are moved, and they are full of tears, in their confessions and prayers, which they are ready to make very much of, as though they were some atonement, and had power to move correspondent affections in God too: and hence they are for a while big with expectation of what God will do for them; and conceive that they grow better apace, and shall soon be thoroughly converted. But these affections are but short-lived, they quickly find that they fail, and then they think themselves to be grown worse again; they do not find such a prospect of being soon converted as they thought; instead of being nearer, they seem to be farther off; their hearts they think are grown harder, and by this means their fears of perishing greatly increase. But though they are disappointed, they renew their attempts again and again; and still as their attempts are multiplied, so are their disappointments; all fail, they see no token of having inclined God's heart to them, they do not see that he hears their prayer at all, as they expected he would; and sometimes there have been great temptations arising hence to leave off seeking, and to yield up the case. But as they are still more terrified with fears of perishing, and their former hopes of prevailing on God to be merciful to them in a great measure fail, sometimes their religious affections have turned into heart-risings against God, because that he would not pity them, and seems to have little regard to their distress and piteous cries, and to all the pains they take: they think of the mercy that God has shown to others, how soon, and how easily others have obtained comfort, and those too that were worse than they, and have not labored so much as they have done, and sometimes they have had even dreadful blasphemous thoughts, in these circumstances.

But when they reflect on these wicked workings of heart against God, if their convictions are continued, and the Spirit of God is not provoked utterly to forsake them, they have more distressing apprehensions of the anger of God towards those, whose hearts work after such a sinful manner about him; and it

may be have great fears that they have committed the unpardonable sin, or that God will surely never show mercy to them that are such vipers: and are often tempted to leave off in despair.

But then perhaps, by something they read or hear of the infinite mercy of God, and all-sufficiency of Christ for the chief of sinners; they have some encouragement and hope renewed; but think that as yet they are not fit to come to Christ, they are so wicked that Christ will never accept of them: and then it may be they set themselves upon a new course of fruitless endeavors in their own strength to make themselves better, and still meet with new disappointments: they are earnest to inquire what they shall do. They do not know but there is something else to be done, in order to their obtaining converting grace, that they have never done yet. It may be they hope they are something better than they were; but then the pleasing dream all vanishes again. If they are told that they trust too much to their own strength and righteousness, they cannot unlearn this practice all at once, and find not yet the appearance of any good, but all looks as dark as midnight to them. Thus they wander about from mountain to hill, seeking rest and finding none: when they are beat out of one refuge they fly to another, till they are, as it were, debilitated, broken, and subdued with legal humblings; in which God gives them a conviction of their own utter helplessness and insufficiency, and discovers the true remedy in a clearer knowledge of Christ and his gospel.

When they begin to seek salvation, they are commonly profoundly ignorant of themselves; they are not sensible how blind they are, and how little they can do towards bringing themselves to see spiritual things aright, and towards putting forth gracious exercises in their own souls; they are not sensible how remote they are from love to God, and other holy dispositions, and how dead they are to sin. When they see unexpected pollution in their own hearts, they go about to wash away their own defilements, and make themselves clean; and they weary themselves in vain, till God shows them it is in vain, and that their help is not where they have sought it, but elsewhere.

But some persons continue wandering in such a kind of labyrinth, ten times as long as others, before their own experience will convince them of their insufficiency; and so it appears not to be their own experience only, but the convincing influence of God's Spirit with their experience, that attains the effect: and God has of late abundantly shown that he does not need to wait to have men convinced by long and often repeated, fruitless trials; for in multitudes of instances he has made a shorter work of it; he has so awakened and convinced persons' consciences, and made them so sensible of their exceeding great vileness, and given them such a sense of his wrath against sin, as has quickly overcome all their vain self-confidence, and borne them down into the dust before a holy and righteous God.

There have been some who have not had great terrors, but have had a very quick work. Some of those that have not had so deep a conviction of these things before their conversion, have, it may be, much more of it afterwards. God has appeared far from limiting himself to any certain method in his proceedings with sinners under legal convictions. In some instances it seems easy for our reasoning powers to discern the methods of divine wisdom, in his dealings with the soul under awakenings: in others his footsteps cannot be traced, and his ways are past finding out: and some that are less distinctly wrought upon, in what is preparatory to grace, appear no less eminent in gracious experiences afterwards.

There is in nothing a greater difference, in different persons, than with respect

to the time of their being under trouble; some but a few days, and others for months or years. There were many in this town that had been before this effusion of God's Spirit upon us, for years, and some for many years, concerned about their salvation; though probably they were not thoroughly awakened, yet they were concerned to such a degree as to be very uneasy, so as to live an uncomfortable, disquieted life, and so as to continue in a way of taking considerable pains about their salvation, but had never obtained any comfortable evidence of a good estate, who now in this extraordinary time have received light; but many of them were some of the last: they first saw multitudes of others rejoicing, and with songs of deliverance in their mouths, who seemed wholly careless and at ease, and in pursuit of vanity, while they had been bowed down with solicitude about their souls; yea, some had lived licentiously, and so continued till a little before they were converted, and grew up to a holy rejoicing in the infinite blessings God had bestowed upon them.

And whatever minister has a like occasion to deal with souls, in a flock under such circumstances, as this was in the last year, I cannot but think he will soon find himself under a necessity, greatly to insist upon it with them, that God is under no manner of obligation to show any mercy to any natural man, whose heart is not turned to God: and that a man can challenge nothing, either in absolute justice, or by free promise, from any thing he does before he has believed on Jesus Christ, or has true repentance begun in him. It appears to me, that if I had taught those that came to me under trouble, any other doctrine, I should have taken a most direct course utterly to have undone them: I should have directly crossed what was plainly the drift of the Spirit of God in his influences upon them; for if they had believed what I said, it would either have promoted self-flattery and carelessness, and so put an end to their awakenings; or cherished and established their contention and strife with God, concerning his dealings with them and others, and blocked up their way to that humiliation before the sovereign disposer of life and death, whereby God is wont to prepare them for his consolations. And yet those that have been under awakenings, have oftentimes plainly stood in need of being encouraged, by being told of the infinite and all-sufficient mercy of God in Christ; and that it is God's manner to succeed diligence, and to bless his own means, that so awakenings and encouragements, fear and hope, may be duly mixed, and proportioned to preserve their minds in a just medium between the two extremes of self-flattery and despondence, both which tend to slackness and negligence, and in the end to security.

I think I have found that no discourses have been more remarkably blessed, than those in which the doctrine of God's absolute sovereignty with regard to the salvation of sinners, and his just liberty, with regard to answering the prayers, or succeeding the pains of mere natural men, continuing such, have been insisted on. I never found so much immediate saving fruit, in any measure, of any discourses I have offered to my congregation, as some from those words, Rom. iii. 19, "That every mouth may be stopped;" endeavoring to show from thence that it would be just with God forever to reject and cast off mere natural men.

In those in whom awakenings seem to have a saving issue, commonly the first thing that appears after their legal troubles, is a conviction of the justice of God in their condemnation, in a sense of their own exceeding sinfulness, and the vileness of all their performances: in giving an account of this they expressed themselves very variously; some, that they saw that God was sovereign, and might receive others and reject them; some, that they were convinced, that God

might justly bestow mercy on every person in the town, and on every person in the world, and damn themselves to all eternity; some, that they see that God may justly have no regard to all the pains they have taken, and all the prayers they have made; some, that they see that if they should seek, and take the utmost pains all their lives, God might justly cast them into hell at last, because all their labors, prayers and tears, cannot make an atonement for the least sin, nor merit any blessing at the hands of God; some have declared themselves to be in the hands of God, that he can and may dispose of them just as he pleases; some that God may glorify himself in their damnation, and they wonder that God has suffered them to live so long, and has not cast them into hell long ago.

Some are brought to this conviction, by a great sense of their sinfulness, in general, that they are such vile wicked creatures in heart and life: others have the sins of their lives in an extraordinary manner set before them, multitudes of them coming just then fresh to their memory, and being set before them with their aggravations; some have their minds especially fixed, on some particular wicked practice they have indulged; some are especially convinced by a sight of the corruption and wickedness of their hearts; some from a view they have of the horridness of some particular exercises of corruption, which they have had in the time of their awakening, whereby the enmity of the heart against God has been manifested; some are convinced especially by a sense of the sin of unbelief, the opposition of their hearts to the way of salvation by Christ, and their obstinacy in rejecting him and his grace.

There is a great deal of difference as to persons' distinctness here; some, that have not so clear a sight of God's justice in their condemnation, yet mention things that plainly imply it. They find a disposition to acknowledge God to be just and righteous in his threatenings, and that they are deserving of nothing: and many times, though they had not so particular a sight of it at the beginning, they have very clear discoveries of it soon afterwards, with great humblings in the dust before God.

Commonly persons' minds immediately before this discovery of God's justice are exceeding restless, and in a kind of struggle and tumult, and sometimes in mere anguish; but generally, as soon as they have this conviction, it immediately brings their minds to a calm, and a before unexpected quietness and composure; and most frequently, though not always, then the pressing weight upon their spirits is taken away, and a general hope arises, that some time or other God will be gracious, even before any distinct and particular discoveries of mercy; and often they then come to a conclusion within themselves, that they will lie at God's feet, and wait his time; and they rest in that, not being sensible that the Spirit of God has now brought them to a frame whereby they are prepared for mercy; for it is remarkable that persons, when they first have this sense of the justice of God, rarely, in the time of it, think any thing of its being that humiliation that they have often heard insisted on, and that others experience.

In many persons, the first convictions of the justice of God in their condemnation, which they take particular notice of, and probably the first distinct conviction of it that they have, is of such a nature, as seems to be above any thing merely legal: though it be after legal humblings, and much of a sense of their own helplessness, and of the insufficiency of their own duties; yet it does not appear to be forced by mere legal terrors and convictions; but rather from a high exercise of grace, in saving repentance, and evangelical humiliation; for there is in it a sort of complacency of soul, in the attribute of God's justice, as

displayed in his threatenings of eternal damnation to sinners. Sometimes at the discovery of it, they can scarcely forbear crying out, 'Tis JUST! 'Tis JUST!—Some express themselves, that they see the glory of God would shine bright in their own condemnation; and they are ready to think that if they are damned, they could take part with God against themselves, and would glorify his justice therein. And when it is thus, they commonly have some evident sense of free and all-sufficient grace, though they give no distinct account of it; but it is manifest, by that great degree of hope and encouragement that they then conceive, though they were never so sensible of their own vileness and ill-deservings as they are at that time.

Some, when in such circumstances, have felt that sense of the excellency of God's justice, appearing in the vindictive exercises of it, against such sinfulness as theirs was, and have had such a submission of mind in their idea of this attribute, and of those exercises of it, together with an exceeding loathing of their own unworthiness, and a kind of indignation against themselves, that they have sometimes almost called it a willingness to be damned; though it must be owned they had not clear and distinct ideas of damnation, nor does any word in the Bible require such self-denial as this. But the truth is, as some have more clearly expressed it, that salvation has appeared too good for them, that they were worthy of nothing but condemnation, and they could not tell how to think of salvation's being bestowed upon them, fearing it was inconsistent with the glory of God's majesty that they had so much contemned and affronted.

That calm of spirit that some persons have found after their legal distresses, continues some time before any special and delightful manifestation is made to the soul of the grace of God, as revealed in the gospel; but very often some comfortable and sweet view of a merciful God, of a sufficient Redeemer, or of some great and joyful things of the gospel, immediately follows, or in a very little time: and in some, the first sight of their just desert of hell, and God's sovereignty with respect to their salvation, and a discovery of all-sufficient grace, are so near, that they seem to go as it were together.

These gracious discoveries that are given, whence the first special comforts are derived, are in many respects very various; more frequently Christ is distinctly made the object of the mind, in his all-sufficiency and willingness to save sinners: but some have their thoughts more especially fixed on God, in some of his sweet and glorious attributes manifested in the gospel, and shining forth in the face of Christ: some view the all-sufficiency of the mercy and grace of God; some chiefly the infinite power of God, and his ability to save them, and to do all things for them; and some look most at the truth and faithfulness of God: in some, the truth and certainty of the gospel in general is the first joyful discovery they have; in others, the certain truth of some particular promises; in some, the grace and sincerity of God in his invitations, very commonly in some particular invitation in the mind, and it now appears real to them that God does indeed invite them. Some are struck with the glory and wonderfulness of the dying love of Christ; and some with the sufficiency and preciousness of his blood, as offered to make an atonement for sin; and others with the value and glory of his obedience and righteousness. In some, the excellency and loveliness of Christ chiefly engages their thoughts; in some his divinity, that he is indeed the Son of the living God; and in others the excellency of the way of salvation by Christ, and the suitableness of it to their necessities.

Some have an apprehension of these things so given, that it seems more natural to them to express it by sight or discovery; others think what they experience better expressed by the realizing conviction, or a lively or feeling sense

of heart; meaning, as I suppose, no other difference but what is merely circumstantial or gradual.

There is often, in the mind, some particular text of Scripture, holding forth some evangelical ground of consolation; sometimes a multitude of texts, gracious invitations and promises flowing in one after another, filling the soul more and more with comfort and satisfaction; and comfort is first given to some while reading some portion of Scripture; but in some it is attended with no particular Scripture at all, either in reading or meditation. In some, many divine things seem to be discovered to the soul as it were at once; others have their minds especially fixing on some one thing at first, and afterwards a sense is given of others; in some with a swifter, and others a slower succession, and sometimes with interruptions of much darkness.

The way that grace seems sometimes first to appear after legal humiliation, is in earnest longings of soul after God and Christ, to know God, to love him, to be humbled before him, to have communion with Christ in his benefits; which longings, as they express them, seem evidently to be of such a nature as can arise from nothing but a sense of the superlative excellency of divine things, with a spiritual taste and relish of them, and an esteem of them as their highest happiness and best portion. Such longings as I speak of, are commonly attended with firm resolutions to pursue this good forever, together with a hoping, waiting disposition. When persons have begun in such frames, commonly other experiences and discoveries have soon followed, which have yet more clearly manifested a change of heart.

It must needs be confessed that Christ is not always distinctly and explicitly thought of in the first sensible act of grace (though most commonly he is); but sometimes he is the object of the mind only implicitly. Thus sometimes when persons have seemed evidently to be stripped of all their own righteousness, and to have stood self-condemned as guilty of death, they have been comforted with a joyful and satisfying view, that the mercy and grace of God is sufficient for them; that their sins, though never so great, shall be no hinderance to their being accepted; that there is mercy enough in God for the whole world, and the like, when they give no account of any particular or distinct thought of Christ; but yet when the account they give is duly weighed, and they are a little interrogated about it, it appears that the revelation of the mercy of God in the gospel, is the ground of this their encouragement and hope; and that it is indeed the mercy of God through Christ, that is discovered to them, and that it is depended on in him, and not in any wise moved by any thing in them.

So sometimes disconsolate souls amongst us, have been revived and brought to rest in God, by a sweet sense given of his grace and faithfulness, in some special invitation or promise, in which is no particular mention of Christ, nor is it accompanied with any distinct thought of him in their minds; but yet it is not received as out of Christ, but as one of the invitations or promises made of God to poor sinners through his Son Jesus, as it is indeed; and such persons have afterwards had clear and distinct discoveries of Christ accompanied with lively and special actings of faith and love towards him.

It has more frequently been so amongst us, that when persons have first had the gospel ground of relief for lost sinners discovered to them, and have been entertaining their minds with the sweet prospect, they have thought nothing at that time of their being converted: to see that there is such an all-sufficiency in God, and such plentiful provision made in Christ, after they have been borne down, and sunk with a sense of their guilt and fears of wrath, exceedingly refreshes them; the view is joyful to them, as it is in its own nature glorious, and

gives them quite new, and more delightful ideas of God and Christ, and greatly encourages them to seek conversion, and begets in them a strong resolution to give up themselves, and devote their whole lives to God and his Son, and patiently to wait till God shall see fit to make all effectual; and very often they entertain a strong persuasion, that he will in his own time do it for them.

There is wrought in them a holy repose of soul in God through Christ, and a secret disposition to fear and love him, and to hope for blessings from him in this way: and yet they have no imagination that they are now converted, it does not so much as come into their minds; and very often the reason is, that they do not see that they do accept of this sufficiency of salvation, that they behold in Christ, having entertained a wrong notion of acceptance; not being sensible that the obedient and joyful entertainment which their hearts give to this discovery of grace, is a real acceptance of it: they know not that the sweet complacence they feel in the mercy and complete salvation of God, as it includes pardon and sanctification, and is held forth to them only through Christ, is a true receiving of this mercy, or a plain evidence of their receiving it. They expected I know not what kind of act of soul, and perhaps they had no distinct idea of it themselves.

And indeed it appears very plainly in some of them, that before their own conversion they had very imperfect ideas what conversion was: it is all new and strange, and what there was no clear conception of before. It is most evident, as they themselves acknowledge, that the expressions that were used to describe conversion, and the graces of God's Spirit, such as a spiritual sight of Christ, faith in Christ, poverty of spirit, trust in God, resignedness to God, &c., were expressions that did not convey those special and distinct ideas to their minds which they were intended to signify: perhaps to some of them it was but little more than the names of colors are to convey the ideas to one that is blind from his birth.

This town is a place where there has always been a great deal of talk of conversion, and spiritual experiences; and therefore people in general had before formed a notion in their own minds what these things were; but when they come to be the subjects of them themselves, they find themselves much confounded in their notions, and overthrown in many of their former conceits. And it has been very observable, that persons of the greatest understanding, and that had studied most about things of this nature, have been more confounded than others. Some such persons that have lately been converted, declare that all their former wisdom is brought to nought, and that they appear to have been mere babes, who knew nothing. It has appeared that none have stood more in need of enlightening and instruction, even of their fellow Christians, concerning their own circumstances and difficulties, than they. and it has seemed to have been with delight, that they have seen themselves thus brought down and become nothing, that free grace and divine power may be exalted in them.

It was very wonderful to see after what manner persons' affections were sometimes moved and wrought upon, when God did, as it were, suddenly open their eyes, and let into their minds, a sense of the greatness of his grace, and fulness of Christ, and his readiness to save, who before were broken with apprehensions of divine wrath, and sunk into an abyss under a sense of guilt, which they were ready to think was beyond the mercy of God: their joyful surprise has caused their hearts as it were to leap, so that they have been ready to break forth into laughter, tears often at the same time issuing like a flood

and intermingling a loud weeping: and sometimes they have not been able to forbear crying out with a loud voice, expressing their great admiration. In some even the view of the glory of God's sovereignty in the exercises of his grace, has surprised the soul with such sweetness, as to produce the same effects. I remember an instance of one, who, reading something concerning God's sovereign way of saving sinners, as being self-moved, and having no regard to men's own righteousness as the motive of his grace, but as magnifying himself, and abasing man, or to that purpose, felt such a sudden rapture of joy and delight in the consideration of it; and yet then suspected himself to be in a Christless condition, and had been long in great distress for fear that God would not have mercy on him.

Many continue a long time in a course of gracious exercises and experiences, and do not think themselves to be converted, but conclude themselves to be otherwise; and none knows how long they would continue so, were they not helped by particular instruction. There are undoubted instances of some that have lived in this way for many years together; and a continuing in these circumstances of being converted and not believing it, has had various consequences, with various persons, and with the same persons, at various times; some continue in great encouragement and hope, that they shall obtain mercy, in a steadfast resolution to persevere in seeking it, and in a humble waiting for it at God's foot; but very often when the lively sense of the sufficiency of Christ, and the riches of divine grace begins to vanish, upon a withdrawal of the influences of the Spirit of God, they return to greater distress than ever; for they have now a far greater sense of the misery of a natural condition than before, being in a new manner sensible of the reality of eternal things, and the greatness of God, and his excellency, and how dreadful it is to be separated from him, and to be subject to his wrath; so that they are sometimes swallowed up with darkness and amazement. Satan has a vast advantage in such cases to ply them with various temptations, which he is not wont to neglect. In such a case persons do very much need a guide to lead them to an understanding of what we are taught in the word of God of the nature of grace, and to help them to apply it to themselves.

I have been much blamed and censured by many, that I should make it my practice, when I have been satisfied concerning persons' good estate, to signify it to them: which thing has been greatly misrepresented abroad, as innumerable other things concerning us, to prejudice the country against the whole affair. But let it be noted, that what I have undertaken to judge of, has rather been qualifications, and declared experiences, than persons: not but that I have thought it my duty, as a pastor, to assist and instruct persons in applying Scripture rules and characters to their own case (in doing of which, I think many greatly need a guide); and have, where I thought the case plain, used freedom in signifying my hope of them, to others: but have been far from doing this concerning all that I have had some hopes of; and I believe have used much more caution than many have supposed. Yet I should account it a great calamity to be deprived of the comfort of rejoicing with those of my flock, that have been in great distress, whose circumstances I have been acquainted with, when there seems to be good evidence that those that were dead are alive, and those that were lost are found. I am sensible the practice would have been safer in the hands of one of a riper judgment and greater experience; but yet there has seemed to be an absolute necessity of it on the forementioned accounts; and it has been found to be that which God has most remarkably owned and blessed amongst us, both to the persons themselves and others.

Grace in many persons, through this ignorance of their state, and their looking on themselves still as the objects of God's displeasure, has been like the trees in winter, or like seed in the spring suppressed under a hard clod of earth; and many in such cases have labored to their utmost to divert their minds from the pleasing and joyful views they have had, and to suppress those consolations and gracious affections that arose thereupon. And when it has once come into their minds to inquire whether or no this was not true grace, they have been much afraid lest they should be deceived with common illuminations and flashes of affection, and eternally undone with a false hope. But when they have been better instructed, and so brought to allow of hope, this has awakened the gracious disposition of their hearts into life and vigor, as the warm beams of the sun in the spring, have quickened the seeds and productions of the earth: grace being now at liberty, and cherished with hope, has soon flowed out to their abundant satisfaction and increase.

There is no one thing that I know of that God has made such a means of promoting his work amongst us, as the news of others' conversion; in the awakening sinners, and engaging them earnestly to seek the same blessing, and in the quickening of saints. Though I have thought that a minister's declaring his judgment about particular persons' experiences, might from these things be justified, yet I am often signifying to my people how unable man is to know another's heart, and how unsafe it is depending merely on the judgment of ministers, or others; and have abundantly insisted on it with them, that a manifestation of sincerity in fruits brought forth, is better than any manifestation they can make of it in words alone can be; and that without this, all pretences to spiritual experiences are vain; as all my congregation can witness.—And the people in general, in this late extraordinary time, have manifested an extraordinary dread of being deceived, being exceeding fearful lest they should build wrong, and some of them backward to receive hope, even to a great extreme, which has occasioned me to dwell longer on this part of the narrative.

Conversion is a great and glorious work of God's power, at once changing the heart, and infusing life into the dead soul; though that grace that is then implanted does more gradually display itself in some than in others. But as to fixing on the precise time when they put forth the very first act of grace, there is a great deal of difference in different persons; in some it seems to be very discernible when the very time of this was; but others are more at a loss. In this respect there are very many that do not know the time (as has been already observed) when they have the first exercises of grace, do not know that it is the grace of conversion, and sometimes do not think it to be so till a long time after: and many, even when they come to entertain great hope that they are converted, if they remember what they experienced in the first exercises of grace, they are at a loss whether it was any more than a common illumination; or whether some other, more clear and remarkable experience, that they had afterwards, was not the first that was of a saving nature. And the manner of God's work on the soul is (sometimes especially) very mysterious, and it is with the kingdom of God as to its manifestation in the heart of a convert, as it is said Mark iv. 26, 27, 28, "So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring, and grow up, he knoweth not how; for the earth bringeth forth of herself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear."

In some, converting light is like a glorious brightness, suddenly shining in upon a person, and all around him: they are in a remarkable manner brought *out of darkness into marvellous light.* In many others it has been like the

dawning of the day, when at first but a little light appears, and it may be is presently hid with a cloud; and then it appears again and shines a little brighter, and gradually increases, with intervening darkness, till at length, perhaps, it breaks forth more clearly from behind the clouds. And many are, doubtless, ready to date their conversion wrong, throwing by those lesser degrees of light that appeared at first dawning, and calling some more remarkable experience, that they had afterwards, their conversion; which often in great measure arises from a wrong understanding of what they have always been taught, that conversion is a great change, wherein *old things are done away, and all things become new*, or at least from a false arguing from that doctrine.

Persons commonly at first conversion, and afterwards, have had many texts of Scripture brought to their minds, that are exceeding suitable to their circumstances, which often come with great power, and as the word of God or Christ indeed; and many have a multitude of sweet invitations, promises, and doxologies flowing in one after another, bringing great light and comfort with them, filling the soul brim full, enlarging the heart, and opening the mouth, in religion. And it seems to me necessary to suppose, that there is an immediate influence of the Spirit of God, oftentimes in bringing texts of Scripture to the mind: not that I suppose it is done in a way of immediate revelation, without any manner of use of the memory; but yet there seems plainly to be an immediate and extraordinary influence, in leading their thoughts to such and such passages of Scripture, and exciting them in the memory. Indeed, in some, God seems to bring texts of Scripture to their minds no otherwise than by leading them into such frames and meditations, as harmonize with those Scriptures; but in many persons there seems to be something more than this.

Those that while under legal convictions had the greatest terrors, have not always obtained the greatest light and comfort; nor have they always light most suddenly communicated; but yet I think, the time of conversion has generally been most sensible in such persons. Oftentimes, the first sensible change after the extremity of terrors, is a calmness, and then the light gradually comes in; small glimpses at first, after their midnight darkness, and a word or two of comfort, as it were, softly spoken to them; they have a little taste of the sweetness of divine grace, and the love of a Saviour, when terror and distress of conscience begins to be turned into a humble meek sense of their own unworthiness before God; and there is felt inwardly, perhaps, some disposition to praise God; and after a little while the light comes in more clearly and powerfully. But yet, I think more frequently, great terrors have been followed with more sudden and great light, and comfort; when the sinner seems to be, as it were, subdued and brought to a calm, from a kind of tumult of mind, then God lets in an extraordinary sense of his great mercy through a Redeemer.

The converting influences of God's Spirit very commonly bring an extraordinary conviction of the reality and certainty of the great things of religion (though in some this is much greater, some time after conversion, than at first); they have that sight and taste of the divinity, or divine excellency, that there is in the things of the gospel, that is more to convince them, than reading many volumes of argument without it. It seems to me that in many instances amongst us, when the divine excellency and glory of the things of Christianity have been set before persons, and they have at the same time, as it were, seen and tasted, and felt the divinity of them, they have been as far from doubting of the truth of them, as they are from doubting whether there be a sun, when their eyes are open in the midst of a clear hemisphere, and the strong blaze of his light overcomes all objections against his being. And yet many of them, if we would

ask them why they believe those things to be true, would not be able well to express, or communicate a sufficient reason, to satisfy the inquirer, and perhaps would make no other answer but that they see them to be true: but a person may soon be satisfied, by a particular conversation with them, that what they mean by such an answer, is, that they have intuitively beheld, and immediately felt, most illustrious works, and powerful evidence of divinity in them.

Some are thus convinced of the truth of the gospel in general, and that the Scriptures are the word of God: others have their minds more especially fixed on some particular great doctrine of the gospel, some particular truths that they are meditating on; or are in a special manner convinced of the divinity of the things they are reading of, in some portion of Scripture. Some have such convictions in a much more remarkable manner than others. And there are some that never had such a special sense of the certainty of divine things impressed upon them with such inward evidence and strength, have yet very clear exercises of grace; i. e., of love to God, repentance, and holiness. And if they be more particularly examined, they appear plainly to have an inward, firm persuasion of the reality of divine things, such as they did not use to have before their conversion. And those that have the most clear discoveries of divine truth, in the manner that has been spoken of, cannot have this always in view. When the sense and relish of the divine excellency of these things fades, on a withdrawment of the Spirit of God, they have not the medium of the conviction of their truth at command: in a dull frame they cannot recall the idea, and inward sense they had, perfectly to mind; things appear very dim to what they did before: and though there still remains an habitual strong persuasion, yet not so as to exclude temptations to unbelief, and all possibility of doubting, as before: but then at particular times, by God's help, the same sense of things revives again, like fire that lay hid in ashes.

I suppose the grounds of such a conviction of the truth of divine things to be just and rational, but yet in some God makes use of their own reason much more sensibly than in others. Oftentimes persons have (so far as could be judged) received the first saving conviction from reasoning, which they have heard from the pulpit; and often in the course of reasoning, which they are led into in their own meditations.

The arguments are the same that they have heard hundreds of times; but the force of the arguments, and their conviction of them, is altogether new; they come with a new and before unexperienced power: before they heard it was so, and they allowed it to be so; but now they see it to be so indeed. Things now look exceeding plain to them, and they wonder that they did not see them before.

They are so greatly taken with their new discovery, and things appear so plain and so rational to them, that they are often at first ready to think they can convince others, and are apt to engage in talk with every one they meet with, almost to this end; and when they are disappointed, are ready to wonder that their reasonings seem to make no more impression.

Many fall under such a mistake as to be ready to doubt of their good estate, because there was so much use made of their own reason in the conviction they have received; they are afraid that they have no illumination above the natural force of their own faculties: and many make that an objection against the spirituality of their convictions, that it is so easy to see things as they now see them. They have often heard that conversion is a work of mighty power, manifesting to the soul, what no man nor angel can give, such a conviction of; but it seems to them that the things that they see are so plain and easy and rational, that

any body can see them: and if they are inquired of, why they never saw so before; they say, it seems to them it was because they never thought of it. But very often these difficulties are soon removed by those of another nature; for when God withdraws, they find themselves as it were blind again, they for the present lose their realizing sense of those things that looked so plain to them, and by all that they can do they cannot recover it, till God renews the influences of his Spirit.

Persons after their conversion often speak of things of religion as seeming new to them; that preaching is a new thing; that it seems to them they never heard preaching before: that the Bible is a new book: they find there new chapters, new psalms, new histories, because they see them in a new light. Here was a remarkable instance of an aged woman of above seventy years that had spent most of her days under Mr. Stoddard's powerful ministry; who, reading in the New Testament, concerning Christ's sufferings for sinners, seemed to be surprised and astonished at what she read, as at a thing that was real and very wonderful, but quite new to her, insomuch that at first, before she had time to turn her thoughts, she wondered within herself that she had never heard of it before; but then immediately recollected herself, and thought that she had often heard of it and read it, but never until now saw it as a thing real; and then cast in her mind, how wonderful this was, that the Son of God should undergo such things for sinners, and how she had spent her time in ungratefully sinning against so good a God, and such a Saviour; though she was a person, as to what was visible, of a very blameless and inoffensive life. And she was so overcome by those considerations, that her nature was ready to fail under them. Those that were about her, and knew not what was the matter, were surprised and thought she was a dying.

Many have spoke much of their hearts being drawn out in love to God and Christ, and their minds being wrapt up in delightful contemplation of the glory and wonderful grace of God, and the excellency and dying love of Jesus Christ, and of their souls going forth in longing desires after God and Christ. Several of our young children have expressed much of this, and have manifested a willingness to leave father and mother, and all things in the world, to go to be with Christ. Some persons have had longing desires after Christ, which have risen to that degree, as to take away their natural strength. Some have been so overcome with a sense of the dying love of Christ, to such poor, wretched, and unworthy creatures, as to weaken the body. Several persons have had so great a sense of the glory of God, and excellency of Christ, that nature and life have seemed almost to sink under it; and in all probability, if God had showed them a little more of himself, it would have dissolved their frame. I have seen some and been in conversation with them in such frames, who have certainly been perfectly sober, and very remote from any thing like enthusiastic wildness; and have talked, when able to speak of the glory of God's perfections, and the wonderfulness of his grace in Christ, and their own unworthiness, in such a manner that cannot be perfectly expressed after them. Their sense of their exceeding littleness and vileness, and their disposition to abase themselves before God, has appeared to be great in proportion to their light and joy.

Such persons amongst us as have been thus distinguished with the most extraordinary discoveries with God, have commonly in no wise appeared with the assuming, and self-conceited, and self-sufficient airs of enthusiasts; but exceedingly the contrary; and are eminent for a spirit of meekness, modesty, self-diffidence, and a low opinion of themselves: no persons seem to be so sensible of their need of instruction, and so eager to receive it, as some of them: nor

so ready to think others better than themselves. Those that have been thought to be converted amongst us, have generally manifested a longing to lie low, and in the dust before God; withal complaining of their not being able to lie low enough.

They very often speak much of their sense of the excellency of the way of salvation, by free and sovereign grace, through the righteousness of Christ alone; and how it is with delight that they renounce their own righteousness, and rejoice in having no account made of it. Many have expressed themselves to this purpose, that it would lessen the satisfaction they hope for in heaven, to have it by their own righteousness, or in any other way than as bestowed by free grace, and for Christ's sake alone. They speak much of the inexpressibleness of what they experience, how their words fail, so that they can in no wise declare it: and particularly speak with exceeding admiration of the superlative excellency of that pleasure and delight of soul which they sometimes enjoy; how a little of it is sufficient to pay them for all the pains and trouble they have gone through in seeking salvation; and how far it exceeds all earthly pleasures; and some express much of the sense which these spiritual views give them of the vanity of earthly enjoyments; how mean and worthless all these things appear to them.

Many, while their minds have been filled with spiritual delights, have, as it were, forgot their food; their bodily appetite has failed, while their minds have been entertained with *meat to eat that* others *knew not of*. The light and comfort which some of them enjoy, gives a new relish to their common blessings, and causes all things about them to appear as it were beautiful, sweet, and pleasant to them: all things abroad, the sun, moon and stars, the clouds and sky, the heavens and earth, appear as it were with a cast of divine glory and sweetness upon them. The sweetest joy that these good people amongst us express, though it include in it a delightful sense of the safety of their own state, and that now they are out of danger of hell; yet frequently in times of their highest spiritual entertainment, this seems not to be the chief object of their fixed thought and meditation. The supreme attention of their minds is to the glorious excellencies of God and Christ, which they have in view; not but that there is very often a ravishing sense of God's love accompanying a sense of his excellency, and they rejoice in a sense of the faithfulness of God's promises, as they respect the future eternal enjoyment of God.

The joy that many of them speak of is, that to which none is to be paralleled; is that which they find when they are lowest in the dust, emptied most of themselves, and as it were annihilating themselves before God, when they are nothing, and God is all, are seeing their own unworthiness, depending not at all on themselves, but alone on Christ, and ascribing all glory to God: then their souls are most in the enjoyment of satisfying rest; excepting, that at such times, they apprehend themselves to be not sufficiently self-abased; for then above all times do they long to be lower. Some speak much of the exquisite sweetness, and rest of soul that is to be found in the exercises of a spirit of resignation to God, and humble submission to his will. Many express earnest longings of soul to praise God; but at the same time complain they cannot praise him as they would do, and they want to have others help them in praising him: they want to have every one praise God, and are ready to call upon every thing to praise him. They express a longing desire to live to God's glory and to to do something to his honor; but at the same time cry out of their insufficiency and barrenness, that they are poor impotent creatures, can do nothing of themselves, and are utterly insufficient to glorify their Creator and Redeemer.

While God was so remarkably present amongst us by his Spirit, there was no book so delighted in as the Bible; especially the book of Psalms, the prophecy of Isaiah, and the New Testament. Some by reason of their esteem and love to God's word, have at some times been greatly and wonderfully delighted and affected at the sight of a Bible; and then also, there was no time so prized as the Lord's day, and no place in this world so desired as God's house. Our converts then remarkably appeared united in dear affection to one another, and many have expressed much of that spirit of love which they felt to all mankind; and particularly to those that had been least friendly to them. Never, I believe, was so much done in confessing injuries, and making up differences as the last year. Persons after their own conversion, have commonly expressed an exceeding desire for the conversion of others: some have thought that they should be willing to die for the conversion of any soul, though of one of the meanest of their fellow creatures, or of their worst enemies; and many have indeed been in great distress with desires and longings for it. This work of God had also a good effect to unite the people's affections much to their minister.

There are some persons that I have been acquainted with, but more especially two, that belong to other towns, that have been swallowed up exceedingly with a sense of the awful greatness and majesty of God; and both of them told me to this purpose, that if they in the time of it, had had the least fear that they were not at peace with this so great a God, they should instantly have died.

It is worthy to be remarked, that some persons by their conversion seem to be greatly helped as to their doctrinal notions of religion; it was particularly remarkable in one, who having been taken captive in his childhood, was trained up in Canada, in the Popish religion; and some years since returned to this his native place, and was in a measure brought off from Popery, but seemed very awkward and dull of receiving any true and clear notion of the Protestant scheme, till he was converted; and then he was remarkably altered in this respect.

There is a vast difference, as has been observed, in the degree and also in the particular manner of persons' experiences, both at and after conversion; some have grace working more sensibly in one way, others in another. Some speak more fully of a conviction of the justice of God in their condemnation; others more of their consenting to the way of salvation by Christ; some more of the actings of love to God and Christ; some more of acts of affiance, in a sweet and assured conviction of the truth and faithfulness of God in his promises; others more of their choosing and resting in God as their whole and everlasting portion, and of their ardent and longing desires after God, to have communion with him; others more of their abhorrence of themselves for their past sins, and earnest longings to live to God's glory for the time to come; some have their minds fixed more on God, others on Christ, as I have observed before, and am afraid of too much repetition; but it seems evidently to be the same work, the same thing done, the same habitual change wrought in the heart; it all tends the same way, and to the same end; and it is plainly the same spirit that breathes and acts in various persons. There is an endless variety in the particular manner and circumstances in which persons are wrought on, and an opportunity of seeing so much of such a work of God, will show that God is further from confining himself to certain steps, and a particular method in his work on souls, than it may be some do imagine. I believe it has occasioned some good people amongst us, that were before too ready to make their own experiences a rule to others, to be less censorious and more extended in their charity, and this is an excellent advantage indeed. The work of God has been

glorious in its variety, it has the more displayed the manifoldness and unsearchableness of the wisdom of God, and wrought more charity among his people.

There is a great difference among those that are converted as to the degree of hope and satisfaction that they have concerning their own state. Some have a high degree of satisfaction in this matter, almost constantly: and yet it is rare that any do enjoy so full an assurance of their interest in Christ, that self-examination should seem needless to them; unless it be at particular seasons, while in the actual enjoyment of some great discovery, that God gives of his glory, and rich grace in Christ, to the drawing forth of extraordinary acts of grace. But the greater part, as they sometimes fall into dead frames of spirit, are frequently exercised with scruples and fears concerning their condition.

They generally have an awful apprehension of the dreadfulness and undoing nature of false hope; and there has been observable in most a great caution, lest in giving an account of their experiences, they should say too much, and use too strong terms: and many after they have related their experiences, have been greatly afflicted with fears, lest they have played the hypocrite, and used stronger terms than their case would fairly allow of; and yet could not find how they could correct themselves.

I think that the main ground of the doubts and fears that persons, after their conversion, have been exercised with about their own state, has been that they have found so much corruption remaining in their hearts. At first their souls seem to be all alive, their hearts are fixed, and their affections flowing; they seem to live quite above the world, and meet with but little difficulty in religious exercises; and they are ready to think it will always be so:—though they are truly abased under a sense of their vileness by reason of former acts of sin, yet they are not then sufficiently sensible what corruption still remains in their hearts; and therefore are surprised when they find that they begin to be in dull and dead frames, to be troubled with wandering thoughts in the time of public and private worship, and to be utterly unable to keep themselves from them; also, when they find themselves unaffected at seasons in which, they think, there is the greatest occasion to be affected; and when they feel worldly dispositions working in them, and it may be pride, and envy, and stirrings of revenge, or some ill spirit towards some person that has injured them, as well as other workings of indwelling sin; their hearts are almost sunk with disappointment; and they are ready presently to think that all this they have met with is nothing, and that they are mere hypocrites.

They are ready to argue, that if God had indeed done such great things for them, as they hoped, such ingratitude would be inconsistent with it; they cry out of the hardness and wickedness of their hearts; and say there is so much corruption, that it seems to them impossible that there should be any goodness there: and many of them seem to be much more sensible how corrupt their hearts are, than ever they were before they were converted; and some have been too ready to be impressed with fear, that instead of becoming better, they are grown much worse, and make it an argument against the goodness of their state. But in truth, the case seems plainly to be, that now they feel the pain of their own wound; they have a watchful eye upon their hearts that they do not use to have: they take more notice what sin is there, and sin is now more burdensome to them; they strive more against it and feel more of the strength of it.

They are somewhat surprised that they should in this respect, find themselves so different from the idea that they generally had entertained of godly persons: for though grace be indeed of a far more excellent nature than they ima-

gined, yet those that are godly have much less of it, and much more remaining corruption, than they thought. They never realized it, that persons were wont to meet with such difficulties, after they were once converted. When they are thus exercised with doubts about their state through the deadness of their frames of spirit, as long as these frames last, they are commonly unable to satisfy themselves of the truth of their grace by all their self-examination. When they hear of the signs of grace, laid down for them to try themselves by, they are often so clouded, that they do not know how to apply them; they hardly know whether they have such and such things in them or no, and whether they have experienced them or not: that which was sweetest and best, and most distinguishing in their experiences, they cannot recover a sense or idea of.—But on a return of the influences of the Spirit of God, to revive the lively actings of grace, the light breaks through the cloud, and doubting and darkness soon vanish away.

Persons are often revived out of their dead and dark frames, by religious conversation; while they are talking of divine things, or ever they are aware, their souls are carried away into holy exercises with abundant pleasure. And oftentimes, while they are relating their past experiences to their Christian brethren, they have a fresh sense of them revived, and the same experiences in a degree, again renewed. Sometimes while persons are exercised in mind with several objections against the goodness of their state, they have Scriptures one after another, coming to their minds, to answer their scruples and unravel their difficulties, exceeding apposite and proper to their circumstances; by which means their darkness is scattered; and often before the bestowment of any new remarkable comforts, especially after long continued deadness and ill frames, there are renewed humblings, in a great sense of their own exceeding vileness and unworthiness, as before their first comforts were bestowed.

Many in the country have entertained a mean thought of this great work that there has been amongst us, from what they have heard of impressions that have been made on persons' imaginations. But there have been exceeding great misrepresentations, and innumerable false reports, concerning that matter. It is not, that I know of, the profession or opinion of any one person in the town, that any weight is to be laid on any thing seen with the bodily eye: I know the contrary to be a received and established principle amongst us. I cannot say that there have been no instances of persons that have been ready to give too much heed to vain and useless imagination, but they have been easily corrected, and I conclude it will not be wondered at, that a congregation should need a guide in such cases, to assist them in distinguishing wheat from chaff. But such impressions on the imagination as have been more usual, seem to me to be no other than what is to be expected in human nature in such circumstances, and what is the natural result of the strong exercise of the mind, and impressions on the heart.

I do not suppose that they themselves imagined that they saw any thing with their bodily eyes; but only have had within them ideas strongly impressed, and as it were, lively pictures in their minds: as for instance, some when in great terrors, through fear of hell, have had lively ideas of a dreadful furnace. Some when their hearts have been strongly impressed, and their affections greatly moved with a sense of the beauty and excellency of Christ, it has wrought on their imaginations so, that together with a sense of his glorious spiritual perfections, there has risen in the mind an idea of one of glorious majesty, and of a sweet and gracious aspect: so some, when they have been greatly affected with Christ's death, have at the same time a lively idea of

Christ hanging upon the cross, and of his blood running from his wounds; which things will not be wondered at by them that have observed how strong affections about temporal matters will excite lively ideas and pictures of different things in the mind.

But yet the vigorous exercise of the mind does doubtless more strongly impress it with imaginary ideas in some than others, which probably may arise from the difference of constitution, and seems evidently in some, partly to arise from their peculiar circumstances: when persons have been exercised with extreme terrors, and there is a sudden change to light and joy, the imagination seems more susceptive of strong ideas, and the inferior powers, and even the frame of the body, is much more affected and wrought upon, than when the same persons have as great spiritual light and joy afterwards; of which it might, perhaps, be easy to give a reason. The forementioned Rev. Messrs. Lord and Owen, who, I believe, are esteemed persons of learning and discretion where they are best known, declared that they found these impressions on persons' imaginations, quite different things from what fame had before represented to them, and that they were what none need to wonder at, or be stumbled by, or to that purpose.

There have indeed been some few instances, of impressions on persons' imaginations, that have been something mysterious to me, and I have been at a loss about them; for though it has been exceeding evident to me, by many things that appeared in them, both then (when they related them) and afterwards, that they indeed had a great sense of the spiritual excellency of divine things accompanying them; yet I have not been able well to satisfy myself, whether their imaginary ideas have been more than could naturally arise from their spiritual sense of things. However, I have used the utmost caution in such cases; great care has been taken both in public and in private, to teach persons the difference between what is spiritual, and what is merely imaginary. I have often warned persons not to lay the stress of their hope on any ideas of any outward glory, or any external thing whatsoever, and have met with no opposition in such instructions. But it is not strange if some weaker persons, in giving an account of their experiences, have not so prudently distinguished between the spiritual and imaginary part; which some, that have not been well affected to religion, might take advantage of.

There has been much talk in many parts of the country, as though the people have symbolized with the Quakers, and the Quakers themselves have been moved with such reports, and came here once and again hoping to find good waters to fish in; but without the least success, and seem to be discouraged, and have left off coming.—There have also been reports spread about the country, as though the first occasion of so remarkable a concern on people's minds here, was an apprehension that the world was near to an end, which was altogether a false report: indeed after this stirring and concern became so general and extraordinary, as has been related, the minds of some were filled with speculation, what so great a dispensation of divine providence might forebode; and some reports were heard from abroad, as though certain divines and others, thought the conflagration was nigh: but such reports were never generally looked upon worthy of notice.

The work that has now been wrought on souls, is evidently the same that was wrought in my venerable predecessor's days; as I have had abundant opportunity to know, having been in the ministry here two years with him, and so conversed with a considerable number that my grandfather thought to be savingly converted in that time; and having been particularly acquainted with

the experiences of many that were converted under his ministry before. And I know no one of them that in the least doubts of its being the same spirit, and the same work. Persons have now no otherwise been subject to impressions on their imagination than formerly: the work is of the same nature, and has not been attended with any extraordinary circumstances, excepting such as are analogous to the extraordinary degree of it before described.—And God's people that were formerly converted, have now partook of the same shower of divine blessing, in the renewing, strengthening, edifying influences of the Spirit of God, that others have in his converting influences; and the work here has also been plainly the same with that which has been wrought in those of other places that have been mentioned, as partaking of the same blessing. I have particularly conversed with persons about their experiences, that belong to all parts of the country, and in various parts of Connecticut, where a religious concern has lately appeared; and have been informed of the experiences of many others by their own pastors.

It is easily perceived by the foregoing account, that it is very much the practice of the people here to converse freely one with another of their spiritual experiences, which is a thing that many have been disgusted at. But however our people may have, in some respects, gone to extremes in it, yet it is doubtless a practice that the circumstances of this town, and neighboring towns, have naturally led them into. Whatsoever people are in such circumstances, where all have their minds engaged to such a degree, in the same affair, that it is ever uppermost in their thoughts, they will naturally make it the subject of conversation one with another when they get together, in which they will grow more and more free: restraints will soon vanish, and they will not conceal from one another what they meet with. And it has been a practice, which, in the general, has been attended with many good effects, and what God has greatly blessed amongst us: but it must be confessed, there may have been some ill consequences of it, which yet are rather to be laid to the indiscreet management of it, than to the practice itself; and none can wonder, if, among such a multitude, some fail of exercising so much prudence in choosing the time, manner and occasion of such discourse, as is desirable.

But to give a clearer idea of the nature and manner of the operations of God's Spirit, in this wonderful effusion of it, I would give an account of two particular instances. The first is an adult person, a young woman whose name was Abigail Hutchinson. I pitch upon her especially, because she is now dead, and so it may be more fit to speak freely of her than of living instances; though I am under far greater disadvantages on other accounts, to give a full and clear narrative of her experiences, than I might of some others, nor can any account be given but what has been retained in the memories of her near friends and some others, of what they have heard her express in her lifetime.

She was of a rational, understanding family; there could be nothing in her education that tended to enthusiasm, but rather to the contrary extreme. It is in no wise the temper of the family to be ostentatious of experiences, and it was far from being her temper. She was, before her conversion, to the observation of her neighbors, of a sober and inoffensive conversation, and was a still, quiet, reserved person. She had long been infirm of body, but her infirmity had never been observed at all to incline her to be notional or fanciful, or to occasion any thing of religious melancholy. She was under awakenings scarcely a week, before there seemed to be plain evidence of her being savingly converted.

She was first awakened in the winter season, on Monday, by something she heard her brother say of the necessity of being in good earnest in seeking re-

generating grace, together with the news of the conversion of the young woman before mentioned, whose conversion so generally affected most of the young people here. This news wrought much upon her, and stirred up a spirit of envy in her towards this young woman, whom she thought very unworthy of being distinguished from others by such a mercy, but withal it engaged her in a firm resolution to do her utmost to obtain the same blessing; and, considering with herself what course she should take, she thought that she had not a sufficient knowledge of the principles of religion to render her capable of conversion; whereupon she resolved thoroughly to search the Scriptures, and accordingly immediately began at the beginning of the Bible, intending to read it through. She continued thus till Thursday, and then there was a sudden alteration, by a great increase of her concern, in an extraordinary sense of her own sinfulness, particularly the sinfulness of her nature, and wickedness of her heart, which came upon her (as she expressed it) as a flash of lightning, and struck her into an exceeding terror. Upon which she left off reading the Bible in course as she had begun, and turned to the New Testament, to see if she could not find some relief there for her distressed soul.

Her great terror, she said, was that she had sinned against God: her distress grew more and more for three days, until (as she said) she saw nothing but blackness of darkness before her, and her very flesh trembled for fear of God's wrath; she wondered and was astonished at herself, that she had been so concerned for her body, and had applied so often to physicians to heal that, and had neglected her soul. Her sinfulness appeared with a very awful aspect to her, especially in three things, viz., her original sin, and her sin in murmuring at God's providence, in the weakness and afflictions she had been under, and in want of duty to parents, though others had looked upon her to excel in dutifulness. On Saturday she was so earnestly engaged in reading the Bible, and other books, that she continued in it, searching for something to relieve her, till her eyes were so dim, that she could not know the letters. Whilst she was thus engaged in reading, prayer, and other religious exercises, she thought of those words of Christ, wherein he wants us not to be as the heathen, that think they shall be heard for their much speaking; which, she said, led her to see that she had trusted to her own prayers and religious performances, and now she was put to a nonplus, and knew not which way to turn herself, or where to seek relief.

While her mind was in this posture, her heart, she said, seemed to fly to the minister for refuge, hoping that he could give her some relief. She came the same day, to her brother, with a countenance of a person in distress, expostulating with him, why he had not told her more of her sinfulness, and earnestly inquiring of him, what she should do. She seemed, that day, to feel in herself an enmity against the Bible, which greatly affrighted her. Her sense of her own exceeding sinfulness continued increasing from Thursday till Monday, and she gave this account of it, that it had been an opinion, which, till now she had entertained, that she was not guilty of Adam's sin, nor any way concerned in it, because she was not active in it; but that now she saw she was guilty of that sin, and all over defiled by it, and that the sin which she brought into the world with her was alone sufficient to condemn her.

On the Sabbath day she was so ill that her friends thought it not best that she should go to public worship, of which she seemed very desirous; but when she went to bed on the Sabbath day night, she took up a resolution that she would, the next morning, go to the minister, hoping to find some relief there. As she awaked on Monday morning a little before day, she wondered

within herself at the easiness and calmness she felt in her mind, which was of that kind which she never felt before; as she thought of this, such words as these were in her mind; the words of the Lord are pure words, health to the soul, and marrow to the bones; and then these words came to her mind—the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin; which were accompanied with a lively sense of the excellency of Christ, and his sufficiency to satisfy for the sins of the whole world. She then thought of that expression—it is a pleasant thing for the eyes to behold the sun—which words then seemed to her to be very applicable to Jesus Christ. By these things her mind was led into such contemplations and views of Christ, as filled her exceeding full of joy. She told her brother in the morning that she had seen (i. e., in realizing views by faith) Christ the last night, and that she had really thought that she had not knowledge enough to be converted; but, said she, God can make it quite easy! On Monday she felt all day a constant sweetness in her soul. She had a repetition of the same discoveries of Christ three mornings together, that she had on Monday morning, and much in the same manner, at each time, waking a little before day, but brighter and brighter every time.

At the last time, on Wednesday morning, while in the enjoyment of a spiritual view of Christ's glory and fulness, her soul was filled with distress for Christless persons, to consider what a miserable condition they were in; and she felt in herself a strong inclination immediately to go forth to warn sinners, and proposed it the next day to her brother to assist her in going from house to house, but her brother restrained her, telling her of the unsuitableness of such a method. She told one of her sisters that day, that she loved all mankind, but especially the people of God. Her sister asked her why she loved all mankind? She replied, because God had made them. After this there happened to come into the shop where she was at work, three persons that were thought to have been lately converted; her seeing them as they stepped in one after another into the door, so affected her, and so drew forth her love to them, that it overcame her, and she almost fainted: and when they began to talk of the things of religion, it was more than she could bear—they were obliged to cease on that account. It was a very frequent thing with her to be overcome with a flow of affection to them that she thought godly, in conversation with them, and sometimes only at the sight of them.

She had many extraordinary discoveries of the glory of God and Christ; sometimes in some particular attributes, and sometimes in many. She gave an account, that once, as those four words passed through her mind, WISDOM, JUSTICE, GOODNESS, and TRUTH, her soul was filled with a sense of the glory of each of these divine attributes, but especially the last.—Truth, she said, sunk the deepest! and, therefore, as these words passed, this was repeated, TRUTH, TRUTH! Her mind was so swallowed up with a sense of the glory of God's truth and other perfections, that she said, it seemed as though her life was going, and that she saw it was easy with God to take away her life by discoveries of himself. Soon after this she went to a private religious meeting, and her mind was full of a sense and view of the glory of God all the time; and when the exercise was ended, some asked her concerning what she had experienced; and she began to give them an account, but as she was relating it, it revived such a sense of the same things, that her strength failed, and they were obliged to take her and lay her upon the bed. Afterwards she was greatly affected, and rejoiced with these words: *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain.*

She had several days together a sweet sense of the excellency and loveliness of Christ in his meekness, which disposed her continually to be repeating over

these words, which were sweet to her, MEEK AND LOWLY IN HEART, MEEK AND LOWLY IN HEART. She once expressed herself to one of her sisters to this purpose, that she had continued whole days and whole nights, in a constant ravishing view of the glory of God and Christ, having enjoyed as much as her life could bear. Once as her brother was speaking of the dying love of Christ, she told him that she had such a sense of it, that the mere mentioning it was ready to overcome her.

Once, when she came to me, she told how that at such and such a time she thought she saw as much of God, and had as much joy and pleasure as was possible in this life, and that yet afterwards God discovered himself yet far more abundantly, and she saw the same things that she had seen before, yet more clearly, and in another and far more excellent and delightful manner, and was filled with a more exceeding sweetness. She likewise gave me such an account of the sense she once had from day to day of the glory of Christ, and of God, in his various attributes, that it seemed to me she dwelt for days together in a kind of beatific vision of God, and seemed to have, as I thought, as immediate an intercourse with him, as a child with a father; and at the same time she appeared most remote from any high thought of herself, and of her own sufficiency, but was like a little child, and expressed a great desire to be instructed, telling me that she longed very often to come to me for instruction, and wanted to live at my house, that I might tell her her duty.

She often expressed a sense of the glory of God appearing in the trees and growth of the fields, and other works of God's hands. She told her sister that lived near the heart of the town, that she once thought it a pleasant thing to live in the middle of the town; but now, said she, I think it much more pleasant to sit and see the wind blowing the trees, and to behold in the country what God has made. She had sometimes the powerful breathings of the Spirit of God on her soul, while reading the Scripture, and would express a sense that she had of the certain truth and divinity thereof. She sometimes would appear with a pleasant smile on her countenance, and once when her sister took notice of it and asked why she smiled, she replied, I am brimful of a sweet feeling within! She often used to express how good and sweet it was to lie low before God, and the lower, said she, the better! And that it was pleasant to think of lying in the dust all the days of her life, mourning for sin. She was wont to manifest a great sense of her own meanness and dependence. She often expressed an exceeding compassion, and pitiful love, which she found in her heart towards persons in a Christless condition, which was sometimes so strong, that as she was passing by such in the streets, or those that she feared were such, she would be overcome by the sight of them. She once said, that she longed to have the whole world saved—she wanted, as it were, to pull them all to her—she could not bear to have one lost.

She had great longings to die, that she might be with Christ, which increased till she thought she did not know how to be patient to wait till God's time should come.—But once, when she felt those longings, she thought, with herself, if I long to die, why do I go to physicians?—Whence she concluded that her longings for death were not well regulated. After this she often put it to herself, which she should choose, whether to live or die, to be sick or to be well, and she found she could not tell, till at last she found herself disposed to say these words—I am quite willing to live, and quite willing to die—quite willing to be sick, and quite willing to be well; and quite willing for any thing that God will bring upon me! And then, said she, I felt myself perfectly easy in a full submission to the will of God. She then lamented

much, that she had been so eager in her longings for death, as it argued want of such a resignation to God as ought to be. She seemed henceforward to continue in this resigned frame till death.

After this her illness increased upon her; and once, after she had before spent the greater part of the night in extreme pain, she awaked out of a little sleep with these words in her heart and mouth.—I am willing to suffer for Christ's sake.—I am willing to spend and be spent for Christ's sake.—I am willing to spend my life, even my very life for Christ's sake! And though she had an extraordinary resignation, with respect to life or death, yet the thoughts of dying were exceeding sweet to her. At a time when her brother was reading in Job, concerning worms feeding on the dead body, she appeared with a pleasant smile, and being inquired of about it, she said, it was sweet to her to think of her being in such circumstances. At another time, when her brother mentioned to her the danger there seemed to be that the illness she then labored under, might be an occasion of her death, it filled her with joy that almost overcome her. At another time, when she met a company following a corpse to the grave, she said, it was sweet to her to think, that they would in a little time follow her in like manner.

Her illness, in the latter part of it, was seated much in her throat, and swelling inward filled up the pipe, so that she could swallow nothing but what was perfectly liquid, and but very little of that, and with great and long strugglings and stranglings, that which she took in, flying out at her nostrils, till she at last could swallow nothing at all: she had a raging appetite to food, so that she told her sister, when talking with her about her circumstances, that the worst bit she threw to her swine would be sweet to her; but yet when she saw that she could not swallow it, she seemed to be as perfectly contented without it as if she had no appetite to it. Others were greatly moved to see what she underwent, and were filled with admiration at her unexampled patience. At a time, when she was striving in vain to get down a little food, something liquid, and was very much spent with it, she looked upon her sister with a smile, saying, O sister, this is for my good! At another time, when her sister was speaking of what she underwent, she told her, that she lived a heaven upon earth for all that. She used sometimes to say to her sister, under her extreme sufferings—It is good to be so! Her sister once asked her, why she said so? Why, says she, because God would have it so: it is best that things should be as God would have.—It looks best to me. After her confinement, as they were leading her from the bed to the door, she seemed overcome by the sight of things abroad, as showing forth the glory of the Being that had made them. As she lay on her death-bed, she would often say these words—God is my friend! And once looking upon her sister, with a smile, said, O sister! How good it is! How sweet and comfortable it is to consider, and think of heavenly things! And used this argument to persuade her sister to be much in such meditations.

She expressed, on her death-bed, an exceeding longing, both for persons in a natural state, that they might be converted, and for the godly that they might see and know more of God. And when those that looked on themselves as in a Christless state came to see her, she would be greatly moved with compassionate affection. One, in particular, that seemed to be in great distress about the state of her soul, and had come to see her from time to time, she desired her sister to persuade not to come any more, because the sight of her so wrought on her compassions, that it overcome her nature.—The same week that she died, when she was in distressing circumstances as to her body, some of the neighbors that came to see her, asked if she was willing to die? She replied, that she

was quite willing either to live or die.—She was willing to be in pain.—She was willing to be so always as she was then, if that was the will of God. She willed what God willed. They asked her whether she was willing to die that night? She answered, yes, if it be God's will; and seemed to speak all with that perfect composure of spirit, and with such a cheerful and pleasant countenance, that it filled them with admiration.

She was very weak a considerable time before she died, having pined away with famine and thirst, so that her flesh seemed to be dried upon her bones, and therefore could say but little, and manifested her mind very much by signs. She said she had matter enough to fill up all her time with talk, if she had but strength. A few days before her death, some asked her whether she held her integrity still? Whether she was not afraid of death? She answered to this purpose, that she had not the least degree of fear of death. They asked her why she would be so confident? She answered, if I should say otherwise, I should speak contrary to what I know; there is, says she, indeed a dark entry, that looks something dark, but on the other side there appears such a bright shining light, that I cannot be afraid! She said, not long before she died, that she used to be afraid how she should grapple with death; but, says she, God has showed me that he can make it easy in great pain. Several days before she died, she could scarcely say any thing but just yes and no, to questions that were asked her, for she seemed to be dying for three days together; but seemed to continue in an admirable sweet composure of soul, without any interruption, to the last, and died as a person that went to sleep, without any struggling, about noon, on Friday, June 27, 1735.

She had long been infirm, and often had been exercised with great pain; but she died chiefly of famine. It was, doubtless, partly owing to her bodily weakness, that her nature was so often overcome, and ready to sink with gracious affection; but yet the truth was, that she had more grace, and greater discoveries of God and Christ, than the present frail state did well consist with. She wanted to be where strong grace might have more liberty, and be without the clog of a weak body; there she longed to be, and there she doubtless now is. She was looked upon amongst us as a very eminent instance of Christian experience; but this is but a very broken and imperfect account I have given of her: her eminency would much more appear, if her experiences were fully related, as she was wont to express and manifest them while living. I once read this account to some of her pious neighbors, who were acquainted with her, who said to this purpose, that the picture fell much short of the life, and particularly that it much failed of duly representing her humility, and that admirable lowliness of heart, that all times appeared in her. But there are (blessed be God!) many living instances of much the like nature, and in some things no less extraordinary.

But I now proceed to the other instance that I would give an account of, which is of the little child forementioned. Her name is Phebe Bartlet, daughter of William Bartlet. I shall give the account as I took it from the mouths of her parents, whose veracity, none that know them doubt of.

She was born in March, in the year 1731. About the latter end of April, or beginning of May, 1735, she was greatly affected by the talk of her brother, who had been hopefully converted a little before, at about eleven years of age, and then seriously talked to her about the great things of religion. Her parents did not know of it at that time, and were not wont, in the counsels they gave to their children, particularly to direct themselves to her, by reason of her being so young, and, as they supposed not capable of understanding; but after her

brother had talked to her, they observed her very earnestly to listen to the advice they gave to the other children, and she was observed very constantly to retire, several times in a day, as was concluded, for secret prayer, and grew more and more engaged in religion, and was more frequently in her closet, till at last she was wont to visit it five or six times in a day, and was so engaged in it, that nothing would, at any time divert her from her stated closet exercises. Her mother often observed and watched her, when such things occurred, as she thought most likely to divert her, either by putting it out of her thoughts, or otherwise engaging her inclinations, but never could observe her to fail. She mentioned some very remarkable instances.

She once, of her own accord, spake of her unsuccessfulness, in that she could not find God, or to that purpose. But on Thursday, the last day of July, about the middle of the day, the child being in the closet, where it used to retire, its mother heard it speaking aloud, which was unusual, and never had been observed before; and her voice seemed to be as of one exceeding importunate and engaged, but her mother could distinctly hear only these words (spoken in her childish manner, but seemed to be spoken with extraordinary earnestness, and out of distress of soul), Pray BLESSED LORD give me salvation! I PRAY, BEG pardon all my sins! When the child had done prayer, she came out of the closet, and came and sat down by her mother, and cried out aloud. Her mother very earnestly asked her several times, what the matter was, before she would make any answer, but she continued exceedingly crying, and wreathing her body to and fro, like one in anguish of spirit. Her mother then asked her whether she was afraid that God would not give her salvation. She then answered yes, I am afraid I shall go to hell! Her mother then endeavored to quiet her, and told her she would not have her cry—she must be a good girl, and pray every day, and she hoped God would give her salvation. But this did not quiet her at all—but she continued thus earnestly crying and taking on for some time, till at length she suddenly ceased crying and began to smile, and presently said with a smiling countenance—Mother, the kingdom of heaven is come to me! Her mother was surprised at the sudden alteration, and at the speech, and knew not what to make of it, but at first said nothing to her. The child presently spake again, and said, there is another come to me, and there is another—there is three; and being asked what she meant, she answered—One is, thy will be done, and there is another—enjoy him forever; by which it seems that when the child said, there is three come to me, she meant three passages of its catechism that came to her mind.

After the child had said this, she retired again into her closet; and her mother went over to her brother's, who was next neighbor; and when she came back, the child being come out of the closet, meets her mother with this cheerful speech—I can find God now! Referring to what she had before complained of, that she could not find God. Then the child spoke again, and said—I love God! Her mother asked her how well she loved God, whether she loved God better than her father and mother, she said yes. Then she asked her whether she loved God better than her little sister Rachel, she answered yes, better than any thing! Then her eldest sister, referring to her saying she could find God now, asked her where she could find God; she answered, in heaven. Why, said she, have you been in heaven? No, said the child. By this it seems not to have been any imagination of any thing seen with bodily eyes that she called God, when she said I can find God now. Her mother asked her whether she was afraid of going to hell, and that had made her cry. She answered, yes, I was; but now I shall not. Her mother asked her whether she thought that God had given her salvation: she answered yes. Her mother asked her, when; she

answered to-day. She appeared all that afternoon exceeding cheerful and joyful. One of the neighbors asked her how she felt herself? She answered, I feel better than I did. The neighbor asked her what made her feel better; she answered, God makes me. That evening as she lay abed, she called one of her little cousins to her, that was present in the room, as having something to say to him; and when he came, she told him that heaven was better than earth. The next day being Friday, her mother asking her her catechism, asked her what God made her for; she answered, to serve him; and added, every body should serve God, and get an interest in Christ.

The same day the elder children, when they came home from school, seemed much affected with the extraordinary change that seemed to be made in Phebe; and her sister Abigail standing by, her mother took occasion to counsel her, now to improve her time, to prepare for another world; on which Phebe burst out in tears, and cried out poor Nabby! Her mother told her, she would not have her cry, she hoped that God would give Nabby salvation; but that did not quiet her, but she continued earnestly crying for some time; and when she had in a measure ceased, her sister Eunice being by her, she burst out again, and cried poor Eunice! and cried exceedingly; and when she had almost done, she went into another room, and there looked upon her sister Naomi, and burst out again, crying poor Amy! Her mother was greatly affected at such a behavior in the child, and knew not what to say to her. One of the neighbors coming in a little after, asked her what she had cried for. She seemed, at first, backward to tell the reason: her mother told her she might tell that person, for he had given her an apple; upon which she said, she cried because she was afraid they would go to hell.

At night a certain minister, that was occasionally in the town, was at the house, and talked considerably with her of the things of religion; and after he was gone, she sat leaning on the table, with tears running out of her eyes; and being asked what made her cry, she said it was thinking about God. The next day being Saturday, she seemed great part of the day to be in a very affectionate frame, had four turns of crying, and seemed to endeavor to curb herself, and hide her tears, and was very backward to talk of the occasion of it. On the Sabbath day she was asked whether she believed in God; she answered yes; and being told that Christ was the Son of God, she made ready answer, and said, I know it.

From this time there has appeared a very remarkable abiding change in the child: she has been very strict upon the Sabbath, and seems to long for the Sabbath day before it comes, and will often in the week time be inquiring how long it is to the Sabbath day, and must have the days particularly counted over that are between, before she will be contented. And she seems to love God's house—is very eager to go thither. Her mother once asked her why she had such a mind to go? Whether it it was not to see fine folks? She said no, it was to hear Mr. Edwards preach. When she is in the place of worship, she is very far from spending her time there as children at her age usually do, but appears with an attention that is very extraordinary for such a child. She also appears very desirous at all opportunities, to go to private religious meetings, and is very still and attentive at home, in prayer time, and has appeared affected in time of family prayer. She seems to delight much in hearing religious conversation. When I once was there with some others that were strangers, and talked to her something of religion, she seemed more than ordinarily attentive; and when we were gone, she looked out very wistly after us, and said—I wish they would come again! Her mother asked her why: says she, I love to hear them talk!

She seems to have very much of the fear of God before her eyes, and an extraordinary dread of sin against him; of which her mother mentioned the following remarkable instance. Some time in August, the last year, she went with some bigger children, to get some plums, in a neighbor's lot, knowing nothing of any harm in what she did; but when she brought some of the plums into the house, her mother mildly reproved her, and told her that she must not get plums without leave, because it was sin: God had commanded her not to steal. The child seemed greatly surprised, and burst out into tears, and cried out—I will not have these plums! And turning to her sister Eunice, very earnestly said to her—Why did you ask me to go to that plum tree? I should not have gone if you had not asked me. The other children did not seem to be much affected or concerned; but there was no pacifying Phebe. Her mother told her she might go and ask leave, and then it would not be sin for her to eat them, and sent one of the children to that end; and when she returned, her mother told her that the owner had given leave, now she might eat them, and it would not be stealing. This stilled her a little while, but presently she broke out again into an exceeding fit of crying: her mother asked her what made her cry again? Why she cried now, since they had asked leave? What it was that troubled her now? And asked her several times very earnestly, before she made any answer; but at last, said it was because—BECAUSE IT WAS SIN. She continued a considerable time crying; and said she would not go again if Eunice asked her a hundred times; and she retained her aversion to that fruit for a considerable time, under the remembrance of her former sin.

She, at some times, appears greatly affected and delighted with texts of Scripture that come to her mind. Particularly, about the beginning of November, the last year, that text came to her mind, Rev. iii. 20, *Behold I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in, and sup with him and he with me.* She spoke of it to those of the family, with a great appearance of joy, a smiling countenance, and elevation of voice, and afterwards she went into another room, where her mother overheard her talking very earnestly to the children about it, and particularly heard her say to them, three or four times over, with an air of exceeding joy and admiration—Why it is to SUP WITH GOD. At some time about the middle of winter, very late in the night, when all were in bed, her mother perceived that she was awake, and heard her as though she was weeping. She called to her, and asked her what was the matter. She answered with a low voice, so that her mother could not hear what she said; but thinking it might be occasioned by some spiritual affection, said no more to her; but perceived her to lie awake, and to continue in the same frame for a considerable time. The next morning she asked her whether she did not cry the last night: the child answered yes, I did cry a little, for I was thinking about God and Christ, and they loved me. Her mother asked her, whether to think of God and Christ's loving her made her cry: she answered yes, it does sometimes.

She has often manifested a great concern for the good of other souls; and has been wont many times, affectionately to counsel the other children. Once about the latter end of September, the last year, when she and some others of the children were in a room by themselves a husking Indian corn, the child, after a while, came out and sat by the fire. Her mother took notice that she appeared with a more than ordinary serious and pensive countenance, but at last she broke silence, and said I have been talking to Nabby and Eunice. Her mother asked her what she had said to them. Why, said she, I told them they must pray, and prepare to die, that they had but a little while to live in this world, and they must be always ready. When Nabby came out, her mother

asked her whether she had said that to them. Yes, said she, she said that and a great deal more. At other times the child took her opportunities to talk to the other children about the great concern of their souls; sometimes so as much to affect them, and set them into tears. She was once exceeding importunate with her mother to go with her sister Naomi to pray: her mother endeavored to put her off, but she pulled her by the sleeve, and seemed as if she would by no means be denied. At last her mother told her, that Amy must go and pray herself; but, said the child, she will not go, and persisted earnestly to beg of her mother to go with her.

She has discovered an uncommon degree of a spirit of charity, particularly on the following occasion: a poor man that lives in the woods, had lately lost a cow that the family much depended on, and being at the house, he was relating his misfortune, and telling of the straits and difficulties they were reduced to by it. She took much notice of it, and it wrought exceedingly on her compassions; and after she had attentively heard him a while, she went away to her father, who was in the shop, and entreated him to give that man a cow; and told him that the poor man had no cow! That the hunters or something else had killed his cow! And entreated him to give him one of theirs. Her father told her that they could not spare one. Then she entreated him to let him and his family come and live at his house; and had much talk of the same nature, whereby she manifested bowels of compassion to the poor.

She has manifested great love to her minister; particularly when I returned from my long journey for my health, last fall, when she heard of it, she appeared very joyful at the news, and told the children of it with an elevated voice, as the most joyful tidings, repeating it over and over, Mr. Edwards is come home! Mr. Edwards is come home! She still continues very constant in secret prayer, so far as can be observed (for she seems to have no desire that others should observe her when she retires, but seems to be a child of a reserved temper), and every night before she goes to bed will say her catechism, and will by no means miss of it: she never forgot it but once, and then after she was abed, thought of it and cried out in tears—I have not said my catechism! And would not be quieted till her mother asked her the catechism as she lay in bed. She sometimes appears to be in doubt about the condition of her soul, and when asked whether she thinks that she is prepared for death, speaks something doubtfully about it: at other times seems to have no doubt, but when asked, replies yes, without hesitation.

In the former part of this great work of God amongst us, till it got to its height, we seemed to be wonderfully smiled upon and blessed in all respects. Satan (as has been already observed) seemed to be unusually restrained; persons that before had been involved in melancholy, seemed to be as it were waked up out of it, and those that had been entangled with extraordinary temptations seemed wonderfully to be set at liberty, and not only so, but it was the most remarkable time of health that ever I knew since I have been in the town. We ordinarily have several bills put up, every Sabbath, for persons that are sick, but now we have not so much as one for many Sabbaths together. But after this it seemed to be otherwise, when this work of God appeared to be at its greatest height. A poor weak man that belongs to the town, being in great spiritual trouble, was hurried with violent temptations to cut his own throat, and made an attempt, but did not do it effectually. He after this continued a considerable time exceedingly overwhelmed with melancholy, but has now, of a long time, been very greatly delivered, by the light of God's countenance lifted up upon him, and has expressed a great sense of his sin in so far yielding to temp-

tation, and there are in him all hopeful evidences of his having been made a subject of saving mercy.

In the latter part of May, it began to be very sensible that the Spirit of God was gradually withdrawing from us, and after this time Satan seemed to be more let loose, and raged in a dreadful manner. The first instance wherein it appeared, was a person's putting an end to his own life, by cutting his throat. He was a gentleman of more than common understanding, of strict morals, religious in his behavior, and a useful, honorable person in the town; but was of a family that are exceeding prone to the disease of melancholy, and his mother was killed with it. He had, from the beginning of this extraordinary time, been exceedingly concerned about the state of his soul, and there were some things in his experience, that appeared very hopefully, but he durst entertain no hope concerning his own good estate. Towards the latter part of his time, he grew much discouraged, and melancholy grew amain upon him, till he was wholly overpowered by it, and was, in great measure, past a capacity of receiving advice, or being reasoned with to any purpose: the devil took the advantage, and drove him into despairing thoughts. He was kept awake nights meditating terror, so that he had scarce any sleep at all, for a long time together. And it was observable at last, that he was scarcely well capable of managing his ordinary business, and was judged delirious by the coroner's inquest. The news of this, extraordinarily affected the minds of people here, and struck them as it were with astonishment. After this, multitudes in this and other towns seemed to have it strongly suggested to them, and pressed upon them, to do as this person had done. And many that seemed to be under no melancholy, some pious persons, that had no special darkness or doubts about the goodness of their state, nor were under any special trouble or concern of mind about any thing spiritual or temporal, yet had it urged upon them, as if somebody had spoken to them, *Cut your own throat, now is a good opportunity.* Now! Now! So that they were obliged to fight with all their might to resist it, and yet no reason suggested to them why they should do it.

About the same time, there were two remarkable instances of persons led away with strange enthusiastic delusions: one at Suffield, and another at South Hadley: that which has made the greatest noise in the country was of the man at South Hadley, whose delusion was, that he thought himself divinely instructed to direct a poor man in melancholy and despairing circumstances, to say certain words in prayer to God, as recorded in Psal. cxvi. 4, for his own relief. The man is esteemed a pious man: I have, since this error of his, had a particular acquaintance with him, and, I believe, none would question his piety, that had had such an acquaintance. He gave me a particular account of the manner how he was deluded, which is too long to be here inserted. But, in short, he was exceedingly rejoiced and elevated with this extraordinary work, so carried on in this part of the country, and was possessed with an opinion that it was the beginning of the glorious times of the church spoken of in Scripture: and had read it as the opinion of some divines, that there would be many in these times that should be endued with extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, and had embraced the notion; though he had at first no apprehensions that any besides ministers would have such gifts. But he since exceedingly laments the dishonor he has done to God, and the wound he has given religion in it, and has lain low before God and man for it.

After these things the instances of conversion were rare here in comparison of what they had before been (though that remarkable instance of the little child was after this); and the Spirit of God after that time appeared very sen-

sibly withdrawing from all parts of the country (though we have heard of its going on in some places of Connecticut, and that it continues to be carried on even to this day). But religion remained here, and, I believe in some other places, the main subject of conversation for several months after this. And there were some turns, wherein God's work seemed something to revive, and we were ready to hope that all was going to be renewed again; yet in the main there was a gradual decline of that general, engaged, lively spirit in religion, which had been before. Several things have happened since, that have diverted people's minds, and turned their conversation more to other affairs, as particularly his Excellency the Governor's coming up, and the Committee of the General Court, on the treaty with the Indians; and afterwards the Springfield controversy, and since that, our people in this town have been engaged in the building of a new meeting-house; and some other occurrences might be mentioned, that have seemed to have this effect.

But as to those that have been thought to be converted among us, in this time, they generally seem to be persons that have had an abiding change wrought on them: I have had particular acquaintance with many of them since, and they generally appear to be persons that have a new sense of things, new apprehensions and views of God, of the divine attributes, and Jesus Christ, and the great things of the gospel: they have a new sense of the truth of them, and they affect them in a new manner; though it is very far from being always alike with them, neither can they revive a sense of things when they please. Their hearts are often touched, and sometimes filled with new sweetnesses and delights; there seems to be an inward ardor and burning of heart that they express, the like to which they never experienced before; sometimes, perhaps, occasioned only by the mention of Christ's name, or some one of the divine perfections: there are new appetites, and a new kind of breathings and pantings of heart, and groanings that cannot be uttered. There is a new kind of inward labor and struggle of soul towards heaven and holiness.

Some that before were very rough in their temper and manners seem to be remarkably softened and sweetened.—And some have had their souls exceedingly filled and overwhelmed with light, love, and comfort, long since the work of God has ceased to be so remarkably carried on in a general way; and some have had much greater experiences of this nature than they had before. And there is still a great deal of religious conversation continued in the town, amongst young and old; a religious disposition appears to be still maintained amongst our people, by their upholding frequent private religious meetings, and all sorts are generally worshipping God at such meetings, on Sabbath nights, and in the evening after our public lecture. Many children in the town do still keep up such meetings among themselves. I know of no one young person in the town that has returned to former ways of looseness and extravagancy in any respect, but we still remain a reformed people, and God has evidently made us a new people.

I cannot say there has been no instance of any one person that has carried himself so, that others should justly be stumbled concerning his profession; nor am I so vain as to imagine that we have not been mistaken concerning any that we have entertained a good opinion of, or that there are none that pass amongst us for sheep, that are indeed wolves in sheep's clothing, who probably may, some time or other, discover themselves by their fruits. We are not so pure but that we have great cause to be humbled and ashamed, that we are so impure; nor so religious but that those that watch for our halting may see things in us, whence they may take occasion to reproach us and religion; but in the main there has been a great and marvellous work of conversion and sanctifica-

tion among the people here, and they have paid all due respects to those who have been blest of God to be the instruments of it. Both old and young have shown a forwardness to hearken not only to my counsels, but even to my reproofs from the pulpit.

A great part of the country have not received the most favorable thoughts of this affair, and to this day many retain a jealousy concerning it, and prejudice against it; I have reason to think that the meanness and weakness of the instrument, that has been made use of in this town, has prejudiced many against it; it does not appear to me strange that it should be so: but yet the circumstance of this great work of God is analogous to other circumstances of it, God has so ordered the manner of the work in many respects, as very signally and remarkably to show it to be his own peculiar and immediate work, and to secure the glory of it wholly to his own almighty power and sovereign grace. And whatever the circumstances and means have been, and though we are so unworthy, yet so hath it pleased God to work! And we are evidently a people blessed of the Lord! And here in this corner of the world, God dwells, and manifests his glory.

Thus, Reverend Sir, I have given a large and particular account of this remarkable affair, and yet considering how manifold God's works have been amongst us, that are worthy to be written, it is but a very brief one. I should have sent it much sooner, had I not been greatly hindered by illness in my family, and also in myself. It is probably much larger than you expected, and it may be than you would have chosen. I thought that the extraordinariness of the thing, and the innumerable misrepresentations which have gone abroad of it, many of which have, doubtless, reached your ears, made it necessary that I should be particular. But I would leave it entirely with your wisdom to make what use of it you think best, to send a part of it to England, or all, or none, if you think it not worthy; or otherwise to dispose of it as you may think most for God's glory, and the interest of religion. If you are pleased to send any thing to the Rev. Dr. Guyse, I should be glad to have it signified to him, as my humble desire, that since he, and the congregation to which he preached, have been pleased to take so much notice of us, as they have, that they would also think of us at the Throne of Grace, and seek there for us that God would not forsake us, but enable us to bring forth fruit answerable to our profession, and our mercies, and that our *light may so shine before men, that others, seeing our good works, may glorify our Father which is in heaven.*

When first I heard of the notice the Reverend Dr. Watts and Dr. Guyse took of God's mercies to us, I took occasion to inform our congregation of it in a discourse from these words: *A city that is set upon a hill cannot be hid.* And having since seen a particular account of the notice of the Reverend Dr. Guyse, and the congregation he preached to, took of it, in a letter you wrote to my honored uncle Williams, I read that part of your letter to the congregation, and labored as much as in me lay to enforce their duty from it. The congregation were very sensibly moved and affected at both times.

I humbly request of you, Reverend Sir, your prayers for this country, in its present melancholy circumstances, into which it is brought by the Springfield quarrel, which, doubtless, above all things that have happened, has tended to put a stop to the glorious work here, and to prejudice this country against it, and hinder the propagation of it. I also ask your prayers for this town, and would particularly beg an interest in them for him who is, Honored Sir, with humble respect, Your obedient son and servant,

JONATHAN EDWARDS

NORTHAMPTON, Nov. 6, 1736.

THOUGHTS

ON THE

REVIVAL OF RELIGION IN NEW ENGLAND,

1740.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The occasion of the following treatise, will be seen, in part, in the preceding narrative. The gracious influences of the Holy Spirit, with which Northampton was so abundantly enriched, and which spread through many towns in its vicinity, were soon followed with a very extensive revival over the land. An extraordinary zeal was excited in many gospel ministers. Itinerants travelled the country and preached daily. They addressed their crowded audiences, not in the dull monotony of a mere moral lecture, but in the demonstration of the Spirit, and with power. Their indefatigable labors were crowned with the most desirable success. Zion put on her robes of salvation. Converts to Jesus were multiplied as the drops of the morning dew. Religion became almost the only subject of concern. Many indulged the hope that the millennial glory was commencing. This glorious work had its opposers. Advantage was taken of the errors of some of its most zealous promoters to cry it down, and render it altogether suspicious. Mr. Edwards' design was to vindicate it, as undoubtedly a work of God, and among the most admirable of his triumphs over the hearts of his enemies; to correct errors which attended it, and to excite augmented efforts for its increase.

The scene which he describes is past. Let it live however in our memories. Let it excite our fervent gratitude, and call forth the devout aspirations of our souls for the spread of the victories of our glorious King in these days. Let the pertinent and instructive sentiments wrought into the treatise, the most of which are adapted to every condition in which the church and the individual believer can be placed, take deep hold of our hearts and be carried out in their proper effects in our lives.

This work had a second edition in Scotland, soon after it was first published in this country.

THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

In the ensuing treatise, I condemn ministers assuming, or taking too much upon them, and appearing as though they supposed that they were the persons, to whom it especially belonged to dictate, direct, and determine; but perhaps shall be thought to be very guilty of it myself: and some, when they read this treatise, may be ready to say that I condemn this in others, that I may have the monopoly of it. I confess that I have taken a great deal of liberty freely to express my thoughts, concerning almost every thing appertaining to the wonderful work of God, that has of late been carried on in the land, and to declare what has appeared to me to be the mind of God concerning the duty and obligations of all sorts of persons, and even those that are my superiors and fathers, ministers of the gospel, and civil rulers. But yet I hope the liberty I have taken is not greater than can be justified. In this nation, such liberty of the press is allowed, that every author takes leave, without offence, freely to speak his opinion concerning the management of public affairs, and the duty of the legislature, and those that are at the head of the administration, though vastly his superiors. As now at this day, private subjects offer their sentiments to the public, from the press, concerning the management of the war with Spain; freely declaring what they think to be the duty of the Parliament, and the principal ministers of state, &c. We in New England are at this day engaged in a more important war: and I am sure, if we consider the sad jangling and confusion that has attended it, we shall confess that it is highly requisite that somebody should speak his mind, concerning the way in which it ought to be managed: and that not only a few of the many particulars, that are the matter of strife in the land, should be debated, on the one side and the other, in pamphlets (as has of late been done with heat and fierceness enough); which does not tend to bring the contention in general to an end, but rather to inflame it, and increase the uproar. But that something should be published, to bring the affair in general, and the many things that attend it, that are the subjects of debate, under a particular consideration. And certainly it is high time that this was done. If private persons may speak their minds without arrogance; much more may a minister of the kingdom of Christ speak freely about things of this nature, which do so nearly concern the interest of the kingdom of his Lord and master, at so important a juncture. If some elder minister had undertaken this, I acknowledge it would have been more proper; but I have heard of no such thing a doing, or like to be done. I hope therefore I shall be excused for undertaking such a piece of work. I think nothing that I have said can justly be interpreted, as though I would impose my thoughts upon any, or did not suppose that others have equal right to think for themselves, with myself. We are not accountable one to another for our thoughts; but we must all give an account to him who searches our hearts, and has doubtless his eye especially

upon us at such an extraordinary season as this. If I have well confirmed my opinion concerning this work, and the way in which it should be acknowledged and promoted, with Scripture and reason, I hope others that read it will receive it, as a manifestation of the mind and will of God. If others would hold forth further light to me in any of these particulars, I hope I should thankfully receive it. I think I have been made in some measure sensible, and much more of late than formerly, of my need of more wisdom than I have. I make it my rule to lay hold of light and embrace it, wherever I see it, though held forth by a child or an enemy. If I have assumed too much in the following discourse, and have spoken in a manner that savors of a spirit of pride, no wonder that others can better discern it than I myself. If it be so I ask pardon, and beg the prayers of every Christian reader, that I may have more light, humility and zeal; and that I may be favored with such measures of the divine Spirit, as a minister of the gospel stands in need of, at such an extraordinary season.

REVIVAL OF RELIGION

IN

NEW ENGLAND.

PART I.

SHOWING THAT THE EXTRAORDINARY WORK THAT HAS OF LATE BEEN GOING ON IN THIS LAND, IS A GLORIOUS WORK OF GOD.

THE error of those who have had ill thoughts of the great religious operations on the minds of men, that have been carried on of late in New England (so far as the ground of such an error has been in the understanding, and not in the disposition), seems fundamentally to lie in three things:

First. In judging of this work *a priori*.

Secondly. In not taking the holy Scriptures as a whole rule whereby to judge of such operations.

Thirdly. In not justly separating and distinguishing the good from the bad.

I. They have greatly erred in the way in which they have gone about to try this work, whether it be a work of the Spirit of God or no, viz., in judging of it *a priori;* from the way that it began, the instruments that have been employed, the means that have been made use of, and the methods that have been taken and succeeded, in carrying it on. Whereas, if we duly consider the matter, it will evidently appear that such a work is not to be judged of *a priori*, but *a posteriori:* we are to observe the effect wrought; and if, upon examination of it, it be found to be agreeable to the word of God, we are bound, without more ado, to rest in it as God's work; and shall be like to be rebuked of our arrogance, if we refuse so to do till God shall explain to us how he has brought this effect to pass, or why he has made use of such and such means in doing of it. Those texts are enough to cause us with trembling to forbear such a way of proceeding in judging of a work of God's Spirit: Isa. xl. 13, 14, "Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel? And who instructed him, and who taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and showed to him the way of understanding?" John iii. 8, "The wind bloweth where it listeth; and thou hearest the sound thereof; but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth." We hear the sound, we perceive the effect, and from thence we judge that the wind does indeed blow; without waiting, before we pass this judgment, first to be satisfied what should be the cause of the wind's blowing from such a part of the heavens, and how it should come to pass that it should blow in such a manner, at such a time. To judge *a priori*, is a wrong way of judging of any of the works of God. We are not to resolve that we will first be satisfied how God brought this or the other effect to pass, and why he hath

made it thus, or why it has pleased him to take such a course, and to use such and such means, before we will acknowledge his work, and give him the glory of it. This is too much for the *clay* to take upon it with respect to the *Potter. God gives not account of his matters: his judgments are a great deep: he hath his way in the sea, and his path in the great waters, and his footsteps are not known; and who shall teach God knowledge, or enjoin him his way, or say unto him, what doest thou? We know not what is the way of the Spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child; even so we know not the works of God, who maketh all.* No wonder, therefore, if those that go this forbidden way to work, in judging of the present wonderful operation, are perplexed and confounded. We ought to take heed that we do not expose ourselves to the calamity of those who pried into the ark of God, when God mercifully returned it to Israel, after it had departed from them.

Indeed God has not taken that course, nor made use of those means, to begin and carry on this great work, which men in their wisdom, would have thought most advisable, if he had asked their counsel; but quite the contrary But it appears to me that the great God has wrought like himself, in the manner of his carrying on this work; so as very much to show his own glory, and exalt his own sovereignty, power, and all-sufficiency, and pour contempt on all that human strength, wisdom, prudence, and sufficiency that men have been wont to trust, and to glory in; and so as greatly to cross, rebuke, and chastise the pride and other corruptions of men; in a fulfilment of that, Isa. ii. 17: "And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day." God doth thus, in intermingling in his providence so many stumbling-blocks with this work; in suffering so much of human weakness and infirmity to appear; and in ordering so many things that are mysterious to men's wisdom: in pouring out his Spirit chiefly on the common people, and bestowing his greatest and highest favors upon them, admitting them nearer to himself than the great, the honorable, the rich, and the learned, agreeable to that prophecy, Zech. xii. 7, "The Lord also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David, and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, do not magnify themselves against Judah." Those that dwelt in the tents of Judah were the common people, that dwelt in the country, and were of inferior rank. The inhabitants of Jerusalem were their citizens, their men of wealth and figure: and Jerusalem also was the chief place of the habitation or resort of their priests, and Levites, and their officers and judges; there sat the great Sanhedrim. The house of David were the highest rank of all, the royal family, and the great men that were round about the king. It is evident by the context that this prophecy has respect to something further than the saving the people out of the Babylonish captivity.

God in this work has begun at the lower end, and he has made use of the weak and foolish things of the world to carry on his work. The ministers that have been chiefly improved, some of them have been mere babes in age and standing, and some of them, such as have not been so high in reputation among their fellows as many others; and God has suffered their infirmities to appear in the sight of others, so as much to displease them; and at the same time it has pleased God to improve them, and greatly to succeed them, while he has not so succeeded others that are generally reputed vastly their superiors. Yea, there is reason to think that it has pleased God to make use of the infirmities and sins of some that he has improved and succeeded; as particularly their imprudent and rash zeal, and censorious spirit, to chastise the deadness, negligence, earthly mindedness, and vanity, that have been found among ministers, in the late

times of general declension and deadness, wherein wise virgins and foolish, ministers and people have sunk into such a deep sleep. These things in ministers of the gospel, that go forth as the ambassadors of Christ, and have the care of immortal souls, are extremely abominable to God; vastly more hateful in his sight than all the imprudence, and intemperate heats, wildness, and distraction (as some call it) of these zealous preachers. A supine carelessness, and a vain, carnal, worldly spirit, in a minister of the gospel, is the worst madness and distraction in the sight of God. God may also make use at this day, of the unchristian censoriousness of some preachers, the more to humble and purify some of his own children and true servants, that have been wrongfully censured, to fit them for more eminent service, and future honor that he designs them for.

II. Another foundation error of those that do not acknowledge the divinity of this work, is not taking the Holy Scripture as a *whole*, and in itself a sufficient rule to judge of such things by. They that have one certain consistent rule to judge by, are like to come to some clear determination; but they that have half a dozen different rules to make the thing they would judge of agree to, no wonder that instead of justly and clearly determining, they do but perplex and darken themselves and others. They that would learn the true measure of any thing, and will have many different measures to try it by, and find in it a conformity to, have a task that they will not accomplish.

Those that I am speaking of will indeed make some use of Scripture, so far as they think it serves their turn; but do not make use of it *alone*, as a rule sufficient by itself, but make as much, and a great deal more use of other things, diverse and wide from it, to judge of this work by. As particularly,

1. Some make philosophy, instead of the Holy Scriptures, their rule of judging of this work; particularly the philosophical notions they entertain of the nature of the soul, its faculties and affections. Some are ready to say, "There is but little sober, solid religion in this work: it is little else but flash and noise. Religion now-a-days all runs out into transports and high flights of the passions and affections." In their philosophy, the affections of the soul are something diverse from the will, and not appertaining to the noblest part of the soul, but the meanest principles that it has, that belong to man, as partaking of animal nature, and what he has in common with the brute creation, rather than any thing whereby he is conformed to angels and pure spirits. And though they acknowledge that a good use may be made of the affections in religion, yet they suppose that the substantial part of religion does not consist in them, but that they are rather to be looked upon as something adventitious and accidental in Christianity.

But I cannot but think that these gentlemen labor under great mistakes, both in their philosophy and divinity. It is true, distinction must be made in affections or passions. There is a great deal of difference in high and raised affections, which must be distinguished by the skill of the observer. Some are much more solid than others. There are many exercises of the affections that are very flashy, and little to be depended on; and oftentimes there is a great deal that appertains to them, or rather that is the effect of them, that has its seat in animal nature, and is very much owing to the constitution and frame of the body; and that which sometimes more especially obtains the name of passion, is nothing solid or substantial. But it is false philosophy to suppose this to be the case with all exercises of affection in the soul, or with all great and high affections; and false divinity to suppose that religious affections do not appertain to the substance and essence of Christianity: on the contrary, it seems to me that the very life and soul of all true religion consists in them.

I humbly conceive that the affections of the soul are not properly distinguished from the will, as though they were two faculties in the soul. All acts of the affections of the soul are in some sense acts of the will, and all acts of the will are acts of the affections. All exercises of the will are in some degree or other, exercises of the soul's appetition or aversion; or which is the same thing, of its love or hatred. The soul wills one thing rather than another, or chooses one thing rather than another, no otherwise than as it loves one thing more than another; but love and hatred are affections of the soul: and therefore all acts of the will are truly acts of the affections; though the exercises of the will do not obtain the name of passions, unless the will, either in its aversion or opposition, be exercised in a high degree, or in a vigorous and lively manner

All will allow that true virtue or holiness has its seat chiefly in the heart, rather than in the head: it therefore follows, from what has been said already, that it consists chiefly in holy affections. The things of religion take place in men's hearts, no further than they are *affected* with them. The informing of the understanding is all vain, any farther than it *affects* the heart; or which is the same thing, has influence on the *affections*.

Those gentlemen that make light of these raised affections in religion, will doubtless allow that true religion and holiness, as it has its seat in the heart, is capable of very high degrees, and high exercises in the soul. As for instance; they will doubtless allow that the holiness of the heart or will, is capable of being raised to a hundred times as great a degree of strength as it is in the most eminent saint on earth, or to be exerted in a hundred times so strong and vigorous exercises of the heart; and yet be true religion or holiness still, but only in a high degree. Now therefore I would ask them, by what name they will call these high and vigorous exercises of the will or heart? Are they not high affections? What can they consist in, but in high acts of love; strong and vigorous exercises of benevolence and complacence; high, exalting and admiring thoughts of God and his perfections; strong desires after God? &c. And now what are we come to but high and raised affections? Yea, those very same high and raised affections that before they objected against, or made light of, as worthy of little regard?

I suppose furthermore that all will allow that there is nothing but solid religion in heaven: but that there, religion and holiness of heart is raised to an exceeding great height, to strong, high, exalted exercises of heart. Now, what other kinds of such exceeding strong and high exercises of the heart, or of holiness, as it has its seat in their hearts, can we devise for them, but only holy affections, high degrees of actings of love to God, rejoicing in God, admiring of God? &c. Therefore these things in the saints and angels in heaven, are not to be despised and cashiered by the name of great heats and transports of the passions.

And it will doubtless be yet further allowed, that the more eminent the saints are on earth, and the stronger their grace is, and the higher its exercises are, the more they are like the saints in heaven; i. e., (by what has been just now observed) the more they have of high or raised affections in religion.

Though there are false affections in religion, and affections that in some respects are raised high, that are flashy, yet undoubtedly there are also true, holy and solid affections; and the higher these are raised, the better: and if they are raised to an exceeding great height, they are not to be thought meanly of or suspected, merely because of their great degree, but, on the contrary, to be esteemed and rejoiced in. Charity or divine love, is in Scripture represented as the sum of all the religion of the heart; but this is nothing but a holy *affec-*

tion: and therefore in proportion as this is firmly fixed in the soul, and raised to a great height, the more eminent a person is in holiness. Divine love or charity is represented as the sum of all the religion of heaven, and that wherein mainly the religion of the church in its more perfect state on earth shall consist, when knowledge and tongues, and prophesyings shall cease; and therefore the higher this holy affection is raised in the church of God, or in a gracious soul, the more excellent and perfect is the state of the church, or a particular soul.

If we take the Scriptures for our rule then, the greater and higher are the exercises of love to God, delight and complacence in God, desires and longings after God, delight in the children of God, love to mankind, brokenness of heart, abhorrence of sin, and self-abhorrence for sin; and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, and joy in the Holy Ghost, joy unspeakable and full of glory; admiring thoughts of God, exulting and glorifying in God; so much the higher is Christ's religion, or that virtue which he and his apostles taught, raised in the soul.

It is a stumbling to some that religious affections should seem to be so powerful, or that they should be so violent (as they express it) in some persons: they are therefore ready to doubt whether it can be the Spirit of God, or whether this vehemence be not rather a sign of the operation of an evil spirit. But why should such a doubt arise from no other ground than this? What is represented in Scripture, as more powerful in its effects, than the Spirit of God?—Which is therefore called *the power of the Highest*, Luke i. 35. And its saving effect in the soul, called the *power of godliness*. So we read of the demonstration of the Spirit, and of power, 1 Cor. ii. 4. And it is said to operate in the minds of men with the exceeding greatness of divine power, and according to the working of God's mighty power, Eph. i. 19. So we read of the effectual working of his power, Eph. iii. 7. And of the power that worketh in Christians, v. 20. And of the glorious power of God in the operations of the Spirit, Col. i. 11. And of the work of faith, its being wrought with power, 2 Thess. i. 11, and in 2 Tim. i. 7. The Spirit of God is called the spirit of power, and love, and of a sound mind. So the Spirit is represented by a mighty wind, and by fire, things most powerful in their operation.

2. Many are guilty of not taking the holy Scriptures as a sufficient and whole rule, whereby to judge of this work, whether it be the work of God, in that they judge by those things which the Scripture does not give as any signs or marks whereby to judge one way or the other, and therefore do in no wise belong to the Scripture rule of judging, viz., the effects that religious exercises and affections of mind have upon the body. Scripture rules respect the state of the mind, and persons' moral conduct, and voluntary behavior, and not the physical state of the body. The design of the Scripture is to teach us divinity, and not physic and anatomy. Ministers are made the watchmen of men's souls, and not of their bodies; and therefore the great rule which God has committed into their hands, is to make them divines, and not physicians. Christ knew what instructions and rules his church would stand in need of better than we do; and if he had seen it needful in order to the church's safety, he doubtless would have given ministers rules to judge of bodily effects, and would have told them how the pulse should beat under such and such religious exercises of mind; when men should look pale, and when they should shed tears; when they should tremble, and whether or no they should ever be faint or cry out; or whether the body should ever be put into convulsions: he probably would have put some book into their hands, that should have tended to make them excellent anatomists and physicians: but he has not done it, because he did not see it to be

needful. He judged, that if ministers thoroughly did their duty as watchmen and overseers of the state and frame of men's souls, and of their voluntary conduct, according to the rules he had given, his church would be well provided for, as to its safety in these matters. And therefore those ministers of Christ and overseers of souls, that busy themselves, and are full of concern about the involuntary motions of the fluids and solids of men's bodies, and from thence full of doubts and suspicions of the cause, when nothing appears but that the state and frame of their minds, and their voluntary behavior is good, and agreeable to God's word; I say, such ministers go out of the place that Christ has set them in, and leave their proper business, as much as if they should undertake to tell who are under the influence of the Spirit by their looks, or their gait. I cannot see which way we are in danger, or how the devil is likely to get any notable advantage against us, if we do but thoroughly do our duty with respect to those two things, viz., the state of persons' minds, and their moral conduct, seeing to it that they be maintained in an agreeableness to the rules that Christ has given us. If things are but kept right in these respects, our fears and suspicions arising from extraordinary bodily effects seem wholly groundless.

The most specious thing that is alleged against these extraordinary effects on the body, is, that the body is impaired, and health wronged; and that it is hard to think that God, in the merciful influences of his Spirit on men, would wound their bodies and impair their health. But if it were so pretty commonly, or in multiplied instances (which I do not suppose it is), that persons received a lasting wound to their health by extraordinary religious impressions made upon their minds, yet it is too much for us to determine that God shall never bring an outward calamity, in bestowing a vastly greater spiritual and eternal good.

Jacob, in doing his duty in wrestling with God for the blessing, and while God was striving with him, at the same time that he received the blessing from God, suffered a great outward calamity from his hand; God impaired his body so that he never got over it as long as he lived: he gave him the blessing, but sent him away halting on his thigh, and he went lame all his life after. And yet this is not mentioned as if it were any diminution of the great mercy of God to him, when God blessed him and he received his name Israel, because as a Prince he had power with God, and had prevailed.

But, say some, the operations of the Spirit of God, are of a benign nature; nothing is of a more kind influence on human nature, than the merciful breathings of God's own Spirit. But it has been a thing generally supposed and allowed in the church of God, till now, that there is such a thing as being sick of love to Christ, or having the bodily strength weakened by strong and vigorous exercises of love to him. And however kind to human nature the influences of the Spirit of God are, yet nobody doubts but that divine and eternal things, as they may be discovered, would overpower the nature of man in its present weak state; and that therefore the body in its present weakness, is not fitted for the views, and pleasures, and employments of heaven: and that if God did discover but a little of that which is seen by the saints and angels in heaven, our frail natures would sink under it. Indeed I know not what persons may deny now, to defend themselves in a cause they have had their spirits long engaged in; but I know these things do not use to be denied or doubted of. Let us rationally consider what we profess to believe of the infinite greatness of the things of God, the divine wrath, the divine glory, and the divine infinite love and grace in Jesus Christ, and the vastness and infinite importance of the things of eternity; and how reasonable it is to suppose, that if it pleases God a little

.o withdraw the veil and let in light into the soul, and give something of a view of the great things of another world in their transcendent and infinite greatness, that human nature, that is as the grass, a shaking leaf, a weak withering flower, should totter under such a discovery? Such a bubble is too weak to bear the weight of a view of things that are so vast. Alas! what is such dust and ashes, that it should support itself under the view of the awful wrath or infinite glory and love of Jehovah? No wonder therefore that it is said, no man can see me and live, and flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. That external glory and majesty of Christ which Daniel saw, when there remained no strength in him, and his comeliness was turned in him into corruption, Dan. x. 6, 7, 8; and which the apostle John saw, when he fell at his feet as dead; was but an image or shadow of that spiritual glory and majesty of Christ, which will be manifested in the souls of the saints, in another world, and which is sometimes, in some degree, manifested to the soul in this world, by the influences of the Spirit of God. And if the beholding the image, and external representation of this spiritual majesty and glory, did so overpower human nature, is it unreasonable to suppose that a sight of the spiritual glory itself, which is the substance, of which that was but the shadow, should have as powerful an effect? The prophet Habakkuk, speaking of the awful manifestations God made of his majesty and wrath, at the Red Sea, and in the wilderness, and at Mount Sinai, where he gave the Law; and of the merciful influence, and strong impression God caused it to have upon him, to the end that he might be saved from that wrath, and rest in the day of trouble; says, Hab. iii. 16, "When I heard, my belly trembled, my lips quivered at the voice, rottenness entered into my bones, I trembled in myself, that I might rest in the day of trouble." Which is much such an effect as the discovery of the same majesty and wrath, in the same awful voice from Mount Sinai, has had upon many in these days; and to the same purposes, viz., to give them rest in the day of trouble, and save them from that wrath. The Psalmist also speaks of very much such an effect as I have often seen on persons under religious affections of late: Psal. cxix. 131, "I opened my mouth and panted, for I longed for thy commandments."

God is pleased sometimes in dealing forth spiritual blessings to his people, in some respect to exceed the capacity of the vessel, in its present scantiness, so that he does not only fill it full, but he makes their *cup to run over;* agreeable to Psalm xxiii. 5. And pours out a blessing sometimes, in such a manner and measure that there is not room enough to receive it, Mal. iii. 10, and gives them riches more than they can carry away; as he did to Jehoshaphat and his people in a time of great favor, by the word of his prophet Jehaziel in answer to earnest prayer, when the people blessed the Lord in the valley of Berachah, 2 Chron. xx. 25, 26. It has been with the disciples of Christ, for a long time, a time of great emptiness upon spiritual accounts; they have gone hungry, and have been toiling in vain, during a dark season, a time of night with the church of God; as it was with the disciples of old, when they had toiled all night for something to eat, and caught nothing, Luke v. 5, and John xxi. 3. But now, the morning being come, Jesus appears to his disciples, and takes a compassionate notice of their wants, and says to them, *Children, have ye any meat?* And gives some of them such abundance of food, that they are not able to draw their net; yea, so that their net breaks, and their vessel is overloaded, and begins to sink; as it was with the disciples of old, Luke v. 6, 7, and John xxi. 6.

We cannot determine that God never shall give any person so much of a discovery of himself, not only as to weaken their bodies, but to take away their

lives. It is supposed by very learned and judicious divines, that Moses's life was taken away after this manner; and this has also been supposed to be the case with some other saints. Yea, I do not see any solid sure grounds any have to determine, that God shall never make such strong impressions on the mind by his Spirit, that shall be an occasion of so impairing the frame of the body, and particularly that part of the body, the brain, that persons shall be deprived of the use of reason. As I said before, it is too much for us to determine, that God will not bring an outward calamity in bestowing spiritual and eternal blessings: so it is too much for us to determine, how great an outward calamity he will bring. If God gives a great increase of discoveries of himself, and of love to him, the benefit is infinitely greater than the calamity, though the life should presently after be taken away; yea, though the soul should not immediately be taken to heaven, but should lie some years in a deep sleep, and then be taken to heaven: or, which is much the same thing, if it be deprived of the use of its faculties, and be unactive and unserviceable, as if it lay in a deep sleep for some years, and then should pass into glory. We cannot determine how great a calamity distraction is, when considered with all its consequences, and all that might have been consequent, if the distraction had not happened; nor indeed whether (thus considered) it may be any calamity at all, or whether it be not a mercy, by preventing some great sin, or some more dreadful thing, if it had not been. It is a great fault in us to limit a sovereign, all-wise God, whose judgments are a great deep, and his ways past finding out, where he has not limited himself, and in things, concerning which, he has not told us what his way shall be. It is remarkable, considering in what multitudes of instances, and to how great a degree, the frame of the body has been overpowered of late, that persons' lives have notwithstanding been preserved, and that the instances of those that have been deprived of reason have been so very few, and those, perhaps, all of them, persons under the peculiar disadvantage of a weak, vapory habit of body. A merciful and careful divine hand is very manifest in it, that in so many instances where the ship has begun to sink, yet it has been upheld, and has not totally sunk. The instances of such as have been deprived of reason are so few, that certainly they are not enough to cause us to be in any fright, as though this work that has been carried on in the country, was like to be of baneful influence; unless we are disposed to gather up all that we can to darken it, and set it forth in frightful colors.

There is one particular kind of exercise and concern of mind, that many have been overpowered by, that has been especially stumbling to some; and that is, the deep concern and distress that they have been in for the souls of others. I am sorry that any put us to the trouble of doing that which seems so needless, as defending such a thing as this. It seems like mere trifling in so plain a case, to enter into a formal and particular debate, in order to determine whether there be any thing in the greatness and importance of the case that will answer, and bear a proportion to the greatness of the concern that some have manifested. Men may be allowed, from no higher a principle than common ingenuity and humanity, to be very deeply concerned, and greatly exercised in mind, at the seeing others in great danger, of no greater a calamity than drowning, or being burned up in a house on fire. And if so, then doubtless it will be allowed to be equally reasonable, if they saw them in danger of a calamity ten times greater, to be still much more concerned: and so much more still, if the calamity was still vastly greater. And why then should it be thought unreasonable, and looked upon with a very suspicious eye, as if it must come from some bad cause, when persons are extremely concerned at seeing others in very

great danger of suffering the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God to all eternity? And besides it will doubtless be allowed that those that have very great degrees of the Spirit of God, that is a spirit of love, may well be supposed to have vastly more of love and compassion to their fellow creatures, than those that are influenced only by common humanity. Why should it be thought strange that those that are full of the spirit of Christ, should be proportionably, in their love to souls, like to Christ? Who had so strong a love to them and concern for them, as to be willing to drink the dregs of the cup of God's fury for them; and at the same time that he offered up his blood for souls, offered up also, as their high priest, strong crying and tears, with an extreme agony, wherein the soul of Christ was as it were in travail for the souls of the elect; and therefore in saving them he is said to see of the *travail* of his soul. As such a spirit of love to, and concern for souls was the spirit of Christ, so it is the spirit of the church; and therefore the church, in desiring and seeking that Christ might be brought forth in the world, and in the souls of men, is represented, Rev. xii., as a "woman crying, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered." The spirit of those that have been in distress for the souls of others, so far as I can discern, seems not to be different from that of the apostle, who travailed for souls, and was ready to wish himself accursed from Christ for others. And that of the Psalmist, Psal. cxix. 53, "Horror hath taken hold upon me, because of the wicked that forsake thy Law." And v. 136, "Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy Law." And that of the prophet Jeremiah, Jer. iv. 19, "My bowels! My bowels! I am pained at my very heart! My heart maketh a noise in me! I cannot hold my peace! Because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war!" And so chap. ix. 1, and xiii. 17, and xiv. 17, and Isa. xxii. 4. We read of Mordecai, when he saw his people in danger of being destroyed with a temporal destruction, Esth. iv. 1, "That he rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and bitter cry." And why then should persons be thought to be distracted, when they cannot forbear crying out, at the consideration of the misery of those that are going to eternal destruction?

3. Another thing that some make their rule to judge of this work by, instead of the Holy Scriptures, is history, or former observation. Herein they err two ways: *First*, if there be any thing new and extraordinary in the circumstances of this work, that was not observed in former times, that is a rule with them to reject this work as not the work of God. Herein they make that their rule, that God has not given them for their rule; and limit God, where he has not limited himself. And this is especially unreasonable in this case: for whosoever has well weighed the wonderful and mysterious methods of divine wisdom, in carrying on the work of the new creation, or in the progress of the work of redemption, from the first promise of the seed of the woman to this time, may easily observe that it has all along been God's manner to open new scenes, and to bring forth to view things new and wonderful, such as eye had not seen, nor ear heard, nor entered into the heart of man or angels, to the astonishment of heaven and earth, not only in the revelations he makes of his mind and will, but also in the works of his hands. As the old creation was carried on through six days, and appeared all complete, settled in a state of rest on the seventh; so the new creation, which is immensely the greatest and most glorious work, is carried on in a gradual progress, from the fall of man, to the consummation of all things, at the end of the world. And as in the progress of the old creation, there were still new things accomplished; new wonders appeared every day in

the sight of the angels, the spectators of that work; while those morning stars sang together, new scenes were opened or things that they had not seen before, till the whole was finished; so it is in the progress of the new creation. So that that promise, Isa. lxiv. 4, "For since the beginning of the world, men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, besides thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him." Though it had a glorious fulfilment in the days of Christ and the apostles, as the words are applied, 1 Cor. ii. 9; yet it always remains to be fulfilled, in things that are yet behind, until the new creation is finished, at Christ's delivering up the kingdom to the Father. And we live in those latter days, wherein we may be especially warranted to expect that things will be accomplished, concerning which it will be said, *Who hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such things?*

And besides, those things in this work that have been chiefly complained of as new, are not so new as has been generally imagined: though they have been much more frequent lately, in proportion to the uncommon degree, extent and swiftness, and other extraordinary circumstances of the work, yet they are not new in their kind; but are things of the same nature as have been found and well approved of in the church of God before, from time to time.

We have a remarkable instance in Mr. Bolton, that noted minister of the church of England, who, being awakened by the preaching of the famous Mr. Perkins, minister of Christ in the University of Cambridge, was subject to such terrors as threw him to the ground, and caused him to roar with anguish; and the pangs of the new birth in him were such, that he lay pale and without sense, like one dead; as we have an account in the *Fulfilling of the Scripture*, the 5th edition, p. 103, 104.—We have an account in the same page of another, whose comforts under the sunshine of God's presence were so great, that he could not forbear crying out in a transport, and expressing in exclamations, the great sense he had of forgiving mercy and his assurance of God's love. And we have a remarkable instance in the life of Mr. George Trosse, written by himself (who, of a notoriously vicious, profligate liver, became an eminent saint and minister of the gospel), of terrors occasionally by awakenings of conscience, so overpowering the body, as to deprive, for some time, of the use of reason.

Yea, such extraordinary external effects of inward impressions have not only been to be found in here and there a single person, but there have also before now been times wherein many have been thus affected, in some particular parts of the church of God; and such effects have appeared in congregations, in many at once. So it was in the year 1625, in the west of Scotland, in a time of great outpouring of the Spirit of God. It was then a frequent thing for many to be so extraordinarily seized with terror in the hearing of the word, by the Spirit of God convincing them of sin, that they fell down, and were carried out of the church, who afterwards proved most solid and lively Christians; as the author of the *Fulfilling of the Scripture* informs us, p. 185. The same author in the preceding page, informs of many in France that were so wonderfully affected with the preaching of the gospel, in the time of those famous divines, Farel and Viret, that for a time, they could not follow their secular business; and p. 186, of many in Ireland, in a time of great outpouring of the Spirit there, in the year 1628, that were so filled with divine comforts, and a sense of God, that they made but little use of either meat, drink or sleep, and professed that they did not feel the need thereof. The same author gives an account of very much such things in Mrs. Catherine Brettergh of Lancashire in England (p. 391, 392), as have been complained of, here amongst us, as wild and distracted: how that after great distress, which very much affected her body, the sweat

sometimes bursting out upon her, God did so break in upon her mind with light and discoveries of himself, that she was forced to burst out, crying, "O the Joys, the Joys, the Joys, that I feel in my soul! O they be wonderful, they be wonderful! The place where I now am is sweet and pleasant! How comfortable is the sweetness I feel, that delights my soul! The taste is precious; do you not feel it? Oh so sweet as it is!" And at other times, "O my sweet Saviour, shall I be one with thee, as thou art one with the Father? And dost thou so love me that am but dust, to make me partaker of glory with Christ? O how wonderful is thy love! And oh that my tongue and heart were able to sound forth thy praises as I ought." At another timer time she burst forth thus: "Yea Lord, I feel thy mercy, and I am assured of thy love! And so certain am I thereof, as thou art that God of truth: even so certainly do I know myself to be thine, O Lord my God; and this my soul knoweth right well!" Which last words she again doubled. To a grave minister, one Mr. Harrison, then with her, she said, "My soul hath been compassed with the terrors of death, the sorrows of hell were upon me, and a wilderness of wo was in me; but blessed, blessed, blessed be the Lord my God! He hath brought me to a place of rest, even to the sweet running waters of Life. The way I now go in is a sweet and easy way, strewed with flowers; he hath brought me into a place more sweet than the garden of Eden. O the joy, the joy, the delights and joy that I feel! O how wonderful!"

Great outcries under awakenings were more frequently heard of in former times in the country than they have been of late, as some aged persons now living do testify: particularly I think fit here to insert a testimony of my honored father, of what he remembers formerly to have heard.

"I well remember that one Mr. Alexander Allyn, a Scots gentleman of good credit, that dwelt formerly in this town, showed me a letter that came from Scotland, that gave an account of a sermon preached in the city of Edinburgh (as I remember), in the time of the sitting of the general assembly of divines in that kingdom, that so affected the people, that there was a great and loud cry made throughout the assembly. I have also been credibly informed, and how often I cannot now say, that it was a common thing, when the famous Mr. John Rogers of Dedham in England was preaching, for some of his hearers to cry out; and by what I have heard, I conclude that it was usual for many that heard that very awakening and rousing preacher of God's word, to make a great cry in the congregation."

TIMOTHY EDWARDS.

Windsor, *May* 5, 1742.

Mr. Flavel gives a remarkable instance of a man that he knew, that was so wonderfully overcome with divine comforts; which it is supposed he knew, as the apostle Paul knew the man that was caught up to the third heaven. He relates,

That "As the person was travelling alone, with his thoughts closely fixed on the great and astonishing things of another world, his thoughts began to swell higher and higher, like the water in Ezekiel's vision, until at last they became an overflowing flood: such was the intenseness of his mind, such the ravishing tastes of heavenly joys, and such his full assurance of his interest therein, that he utterly lost all sight and sense of this world, and the concernments thereof; and for some hours, knew not where he was, nor what he was about: but having lost a great quantity of blood at the nose, he found himself so faint, that it brought him a little more to himself. And after he had washed himself at a spring, and drank of the water for his refreshment, he continued to the end

of his journey, which was thirty miles; and all this while was scarce sensible: and says he had several trances of considerable continuance. The same blessed frame was preserved all that night, and in a lower degree, great part of the next day: the night passed without one wink of sleep; and yet he declares he never had a sweeter night's rest in all his life. Still, *adds the story*, the joy of the Lord overflowed him, and he seemed to be an inhabitant of another world. And he used for many years after to call that day one of the days of heaven; and professed that he understood more of the life of heaven by it, than by all the books he ever read, or discourses he ever entertained about it."

There have been instances before now, of persons crying out in transports of divine joy in New England. We have an instance in Capt. Clap's memoirs, published by the Rev. Mr. Prince, not of a silly woman or child, but a man of solid understanding, that in a high transport of spiritual joy, was made to cry out aloud on his bed. His words, p. 9, are, "God's Holy Spirit did witness (I do believe) together with my spirit, that I was a child of God, and did fill my heart and soul with such full assurance that Christ was mine, that it did so transport me, as to make me cry out upon my bed, with a loud voice, *He is come, He is come!*"

There has, before now, been both crying out and falling down, in this town under awakenings of conscience, and in the pangs of the new birth, and also in some of the neighboring towns. In one of them, more than seven years ago, was a great number together that cried out and fell down, under convictions; in most of which, by good information, was a hopeful and abiding good issue. And the Rev. Mr. Williams of Deerfield gave me an account of an aged man in that town, many years before that, that being awakened by his preaching, cried out aloud in the congregation. There have been many instances in this and some neighboring towns, before now, of persons fainting with joyful discoveries made to their souls: once several together in this town. And there also formerly have been several instances here, of persons' flesh waxing cold and benumbed, and their hands clinched, yea their bodies being set into convulsions, being overpowered with a strong sense of the astonishingly great and excellent things of God and the eternal world.

Secondly. Another way that some err in making history and former observation their rule to judge of this work, instead of the Holy Scripture, is in comparing some external, accidental circumstances of this work, with what has appeared sometimes in enthusiasts; and as they find an agreement in some such things, so they reject the whole work, or at least the substance of it, concluding it to be enthusiasm. So, great use has been made to this purpose of many things that are found amongst the Quakers; however totally and essentially different in its nature this work is, and the principles it is built upon, from the whole religion of the Quakers. So, to the same purpose, some external appearances that were found amongst the French prophets, and some other enthusiasts in former times, have been of late trumped up with great assurance and triumph.

4. I would propose it to be considered, whether or no, some, instead of making the Scriptures their only rule to judge of this work, do not make their own experience the rule, and reject such and such things as are now professed and experienced, because they never felt them themselves. Are there not many that chiefly on this ground, have entertained and vented suspicions, if not peremptory condemnations of those extreme terrors, and those great, sudden and extraordinary discoveries of the glorious perfections of God, and of the beauty and love of Christ; and such vehement affections, such high transports of love and joy, such pity and distress for the souls of others, and exercises of mind that

have such great effects on persons' bodies, merely, or chiefly, because they knew nothing about them by experience? Persons are very ready to be suspicious of what they have not felt themselves. It is to be feared many good men have been guilty of this error; which yet does not make it the less unreasonable. And perhaps there are some that upon this ground do not only reject these extraordinary things, but all such conviction of sin, and such discoveries of the glory of God, and excellency of Christ, and inward conviction of the truth of the gospel, by the immediate influence of the Spirit of God, that are now supposed to be necessary to salvation.

These persons that thus make their own experiences their rule of judgment, instead of bowing to the wisdom of God, and yielding to his word as an infallible rule, are guilty of casting a great reflection upon the understanding of the Most High.

III. Another foundation error of those that reject this work, is their not duly distinguishing the good from the bad, and very unjustly judging of the whole by a part; and so rejecting the work in general, or in the main substance of it, for the sake of some things that are accidental to it, that are evil. They look for more in men that are divinely influenced, because subject to the operations of a good spirit, than is justly to be expected from them for that reason, in this imperfect state, and dark world, where so much blindness and corruption remain in the best. When any profess to have received light, and influence, and comforts from heaven, and to have had sensible communion with God, many are ready to expect that now they appear like angels, and not still like poor, feeble, blind and sinful worms of the dust. There being so much corruption left in the hearts of God's own children, and its prevailing as it sometimes does, is indeed a mysterious thing, and always was a stumbling-block to the world; but will not be so much wondered at by those that are well versed in, and duly mindful of, two things, viz., *first*, the word of God, which teaches us the state of true Christians in this world, and *secondly*, their own hearts, at least if they have any grace, and have experience of its conflicts with corruption. They that are true saints are most inexcusable in making a great difficulty of a great deal of blindness, and many sinful errors in those that profess godliness. If all our conduct, both open and secret, should be known, and our hearts laid open to the world, how should we be even ready to fly from the light of the sun, and hide ourselves from the view of mankind! And what great allowances would it be found that we should need, that others should make for us? Perhaps much greater than we are willing to make for others.

The great weakness of the bigger part of mankind, in any affair that is new and uncommon, appears in not distinguishing, but either approving or condemning all in the lump.—They that highly approve of the affair in general, cannot bear to have any thing at all found fault with; and on the other hand, those that fasten their eyes upon some things in the affair that are amiss, and appear very disagreeable to them, at once reject the whole. Both which errors oftentimes arise from want of persons' due acquaintance with themselves. It is rash and unjust when we proceed thus in judging either of a particular person, or a people, or of such an affair as the present wonderful influence on the minds of the people of this land. Many, if they see any thing very ill in a particular person, a minister or private professor, will at once brand him as a hypocrite And if there be two or three of a people or society that behave themselves very irregularly, the whole must bear the blame of it. And if there be a few, though it may be not above one in a hundred, that professed, and had a show of being the happy partakers of what are called the saving benefits of this work, that

prove naught, and give the world just grounds to suspect them, the whole work must be rejected on their account; and those in general, that make the like profession must be condemned for their sakes.

So careful are some persons lest this work should be defended, that now they will hardly allow that the influences of the Spirit of God on the heart, can so much as indirectly, and accidentally be the occasion of the exercise of corruption, and commission of sin. Thus far is true, that the influence of the Spirit of God in his saving operations, will not be an occasion of the increase of the corruption of the heart in general, but on the contrary, of the weakening of it: but yet there is nothing unreasonable in supposing, that at the same time that it weakens corruption in general, it may be an occasion of the turning what is left into a new channel, and so of there being more of some certain kinds of the exercise of corruption than there was before; as that which tends to hinder and stop the course of a stream, if it does not do it wholly, may give a new course to so much of the water as gets by the obstacle. The influences of the Spirit, for instance, may be an occasion of new ways of the exercise of *Pride*, as has been acknowledged by orthodox divines in general. That spiritual discoveries and comforts may, through the corruption of the heart, be an occasion of the exercises of spiritual pride, did not use to be doubted of, until now it is found to be needful to maintain the war against this work.

They that will hardly allow that a work of the Spirit of God can be a remote occasion of any sinful behavior or unchristian conduct, I suppose will allow that the truly gracious influences of the Spirit of God, yea, and a high degree of love to God, is consistent with these two things, viz., a considerable degree of remaining corruption, and also many errors in judgment in matters of religion, and in matters of practice. And this is all that need to be allowed, in order to its being most demonstratively evident, that a high degree of love to God may accidentally move a person to that which is very wrong, and contrary to the mind and will of God. For a high degree of love to God will strongly move a person to do that which he believes to be agreeable to God's will; and therefore, if he be mistaken, and be persuaded that that is agreeable to the will of God, which indeed is very contrary to it, then his love will accidentally, but strongly, incline him to that, which is indeed very contrary to the will of God.

They that are studied in logic have learned that the nature of the cause is not to be judged of by the nature of the effect, nor the nature of the effect from the nature of the cause, when the cause is only *causa sine qua non*, or an occasional cause: yea, that in such a case, oftentimes the nature of the effect is quite contrary to the nature of the cause.

True disciples of Christ may have a great deal of false zeal, such as the disciples had of old, when they would have fire called for from heaven to come down on the Samaritans, because they did not receive them. And even so eminently holy, and great, and divine a saint as Moses, who conversed with God from time to time, as a man speaks with his friend, and concerning whom God gives his testimony, that he *was very meek, above any man upon the face of the earth*, yet may be rash and sinful in his zeal, when his spirit is stirred by the hard-heartedness and opposition of others, so as to speak very unadvisedly with his lips, and greatly to offend God, and shut himself out from the possession of the good things that God is about to accomplish for his church on earth; as Moses was excluded Canaan, though he had brought the people out of Egypt, Psal. cvi. 32, 33. And men, even in those very things wherein they are influenced by a truly pious principle, yet, through error and want of due considera-

tion and caution, may be very rash with their zeal. It was a truly good spirit that animated that excellent generation of Israel that was in Joshua's time, in that affair that we have an account of in the 22d chapter of Joshua; and yet they were rash and heady with their zeal, to go about to gather all Israel together to go up so furiously to war with their brethren of the two tribes and half, about their building the altar Ed, without first inquiring into the matter, or so much as sending a messenger to be informed. So the Christians that were of the circumcision, with warmth and contention condemned Peter for receiving Cornelius, as we have account, Acts xi. This their heat and censure was unjust, and Peter was wronged in it; but there is all appearance in the story that they acted from a real zeal and concern for the will and honor of God. So the primitive Christians, from their zeal for, and against unclean meats, censured and condemned one another: this was a bad effect, and yet the apostle bears them witness, or at least expresses his charity towards them, that both sides acted from a good principle, and true respect to the Lord, Rom. xiv. 6.—The zeal of the Corinthians with respect to the incestuous man, though the apostle highly commends it, yet at the same time saw that they needed a caution, lest they should carry it too far, to an undue severity, and so as to fail of Christian meekness and forgiveness, 2 Cor. ii. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and chap. vii. 11, to the end. Luther that great reformer had a great deal of bitterness with his zeal.

It surely cannot be wondered at by considerate persons, that at a time when multitudes all over the land have their affections greatly moved, that great numbers should run into many errors and mistakes with respect to their duty, and consequently into many acts and practices that are imprudent and irregular. I question whether there be a man in New England, of the strongest reason and greatest learning, but what would be put to it to keep master of himself, thoroughly to weigh his words, and consider all the consequences of his behavior, so as to behave himself in all respects prudently, if he were so strongly impressed with a sense of divine and eternal things, and his affections so exceedingly moved, as has been frequent of late among the common people. How little do they consider human nature, who look upon it so insuperable a stumbling-block, when such multitudes of all kinds of capacities, natural tempers, educations, customs and manners of life, are so greatly and variously affected, that imprudences and irregularities of conduct should abound: especially in a state of things so uncommon, and when the degree, extent, swiftness and power of the operation is so very extraordinary, and so new, that there has not been time and experience enough to give birth to rules for people's conduct, and so unusual in times past, that the writings of divines do not afford rules to direct us in such a state of things?

A great deal of noise and tumult, confusion and uproar, and darkness mixed with light, and evil with good, is always to be expected in the beginning of something very extraordinary, and very glorious in the state of things in human society, or the church of God. As after nature has long been shut up in a cold dead state, in time of winter, when the sun returns in the spring, there is, together with the increase of the light and heat of the sun, very dirty and tempestuous weather, before all is settled, calm and serene, and all nature rejoices in its bloom and beauty. It is in the new creation as it was in the old, the Spirit of God first moved upon the face of the waters, which was an occasion of great uproar and tumult, and things were gradually brought to a settled state, until at length all stood forth in that beautiful, peaceful order, when the heavens and the earth were finished, and God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good. When God is about to bring to pass something great

and glorious in the world, nature is in a ferment and struggle, and the world as it were in travail. As when God was about to introduce the Messiah into the world, and that new and glorious dispensation that he set up, He *shook the heavens and the earth, and shook all nations.* There is nothing that the church of God is in Scripture more frequently represented by than vegetables; as a tree, a vine, corn, &c., which gradually bring forth their fruit, and are first green before they are ripe. A great revival of religion is expressly compared to this gradual production of vegetables, Isa. lxi. 11: "As the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations." The church is in a special manner compared to a palm-tree, Cant. vii. 7, 8, Exod. xv. 27, 1 Kings, vi. 29, Psal. xcii. 12. Of which tree this peculiar thing is observed, that the fruit of it, though it be very sweet and good when it is ripe, yet before it has had time to ripen, has a mixture of poison.

The weakness of human nature has always appeared in times of great revival of religion, by a disposition to run to extremes and get into confusion; and especially in these three things, enthusiasm, superstition, and intemperate zeal. So it appeared in the time of the reformation, very remarkably; and also in the days of the apostles; many were then exceedingly disposed to lay weight on those things that were very notional and chimerical, giving heed to fables and whimsies, as appears by 1 Tim. i. 4, and iv. 7, 2 Tim. ii. 16, and v. 23, and Tit. i. 14, and iii. 9. Many, as ecclesiastical history informs us, fell off into the most wild enthusiasm, and extravagant notions of spirituality, and extraordinary illumination from heaven beyond others; and many were prone to superstition, will-worship and a voluntary humility, giving heed to the commandments of men, being fond of an unprofitable bodily exercise, as appears by many passages in the apostles' writings: and what a proneness then appeared among professors to swerve from the path of duty, and the spirit of the gospel, in the exercises of a rash indiscreet zeal, censuring and condemning ministers and people; one saying, I am of Paul, another I of Apollos, another I of Cephas; judging one another for differences of opinion about smaller matters, unclean meats, holy days and holy places, and their different opinions and practices respecting civil intercourse and communication with their heathen neighbors? And how much did vain jangling and disputing and confusion prevail through undue heat of spirit, under the name of a religious zeal? 2 Tim. vi. 4, 5, 2 Tim. ii. 16, and Tit. iii. 9. And what a task had the apostles to keep them within bounds, and maintain good order in the churches! How often are they mentioning their irregularities! The prevailing of such like disorders seems to have been the special occasion of writing many of their Epistles. The church in that great effusion of the Spirit that was then, and the strong impressions that God's people were then under, was under the care of infallible guides, that watched over them day and night; but yet so prone were they, through the weakness and corruption of human nature, to get out of the way, that irregularity and confusion rose in some churches, where there was an extraordinary outpouring of the Spirit, to a very great height, even in the apostles' lifetime, and under their eye. And though some of the apostles lived long to settle the state of things, yet presently after they were dead, the Christian church ran into many superstitions and childish notions and practices, and in some respects into a great severity in their zeal. And let any wise person that has not, in the midst of the dispute of the present day, got beyond the calmness of consideration, impartially consider to what lengths, we may reasonably suppose many of the primitive Christians, in their heat of zeal, under their ex-

traordinary impressions would soon have gone, if they had had no inspired guides; and whether or no, it is not probable that the church of Corinth in particular, by an increase of their irregularities and contentions, would not in a little time have broke to pieces, and dissolved in a state of the utmost confusion? And yet this would have been no evidence that there had not been a most glorious and remarkable outpouring of the Spirit in that city. But, as for us, we have no infallible apostle to guide us, to rectify disorders, and reclaim us when we are wandering; but every one does what is right in his own eyes; and they that err in judgment, and are got into a wrong path, continue to wander, till experience of the mischievous issue convinces them of their error.

If we look over this affair, and seriously weigh it in its circumstances, it will appear a matter of no great difficulty to account for the errors that have been gone into, supposing the work in general to be from a very great outpouring of the Spirit of God. It may easily be accounted for, that many have run into great errors, and into just such errors as they have. It is known that some that have been improved as great instruments to promote this work, have been very young; and how natural is it for such as are themselves newly awaked out of sleep, and brought out of that state of darkness, insensibility and spiritual death, which they had been in ever since they were born; and have a new and wonderful scene opened to them; and have in view the reality, the vastness, and infinite importance, and nearness of spiritual and eternal things; and at the same time are surprised to see the world asleep about them; and have not the advantage of age and experience, and have had but little opportunity to study divinity, or to converse with aged experienced Christians and divines; I say, how natural is it for such to fall into many errors with respect to the state of mankind, with which they are so surprised, and with respect to the means and methods of their relief? Is it any wonder that they have not at once learned how to make all the allowances that are to be made, and that they do not at once find out that method of dealing with the world, that is adapted to the mysterious state and nature of mankind? Is it any wonder that they cannot at once foresee what the consequences of things will be, what evils are to be guarded against, and what difficulties are like to arise, that are to be provided for?

We have long been in a strange stupor; the influences of the Spirit of God upon the heart have been but little felt, and the nature of them but little taught; so that they are in many respects new to great numbers of those that have lately fallen under them. And is it any wonder that they that never before had experience of the supernatural influence of the divine Spirit upon their souls, and never were instructed in the nature of these influences, do not so well know how to distinguish one extraordinary new impression from another, and so (to themselves insensibly) run into enthusiasm, taking every strong impulse or impression to be divine? How natural is it to suppose that among the multitudes of illiterate people (most of which are in their youth) that find themselves so wonderfully changed, and brought into such new, and before (to them) almost unheard of circumstances, that many should pass wrong, and very strange judgments of both persons and things that are about them; and that now they behold them in such a new light, they in their surprise should go further from the judgment that they were wont to make of them than they ought, and in their great change of sentiments, should pass from one extreme to another? And why should it be thought strange, that those that scarce ever heard of any such thing as an outpouring of the Spirit of God before; or if they did, had no notion of it; do not know how to behave themselves in such a new and strange

state of things? And is it any wonder that they are ready to hearken to those that have instructed them, that have been the means of delivering them from such a state of death and misery as they were in before, or have a name for being the happy instruments of promoting the same work among others? Is it unaccountable that persons in these circumstances are ready to receive every thing they say, and to drink down error as well as truth from them? And why should there be all indignation and no compassion towards those that are thus misled?

When these persons are extraordinarily affected with a new sense, and recent discovery they have received, of the greatness and excellency of the divine Being, the certainty and infinite importance of eternal things, the preciousness of souls, and the dreadful danger and madness of mankind, together with a great sense of God's distinguishing kindness and love to them; no wonder that now they think they must exert themselves, and do something extraordinary for the honor of God and the good of the souls of their fellow creatures, and know not how to sit still, and forbear speaking and acting with uncommon earnestness and vigor. And in these circumstances, if they be not persons of more than common steadiness and discretion, or have not some person of wisdom to direct them, it is a wonder if they do not proceed without due caution, and do things that are irregular, and that will, in the issue, do much more hurt than good.

Censuring others is the worst disease with which this affair has been attended: but yet such a time as this is indeed a time of great temptation to this sinful error. When there has been such a time of great and long continued deadness, and many are brought out of a state of nature into a state of grace, in so extraordinary a manner, and filled with such uncommon degrees of light, it is natural for such to form their notions of a state of grace wholly from what they experience; many of them know no other way; for they never have been taught much about a state of grace, and the different degrees of grace, and the degrees of darkness and corruption that grace is consistent with, nor concerning the manner of the influences of the Spirit in converting a soul, and the variety of the manner of his operations: they therefore forming their idea of a state of grace only by their own experience, no wonder that it appears an insuperable difficulty to them to reconcile such a state, of which they have this idea, with what they observe in professors that are about them. It is indeed in itself a very great mystery, that grace should be consistent with so much and such kind of corruption as sometimes prevails in the truly godly; and no wonder that it especially appears so to uninstructed new converts, that have been converted in an extraordinary manner.

Though censoriousness be a thing that is very sinful, and is most commonly found in hypocrites and persons of a pharisaical spirit, yet it is not so inconsistent with true godliness as some imagine. We have remarkable instances of it in those holy men that we have an account of in the book of Job: not only were Job's three friends, that seem to have been eminently holy men, guilty of it in very unreasonably censuring the best man on earth, very positively determining that he was an unconverted man; but Job himself, that was not only a man of true piety, but excelled all men in piety, and particularly excelled in a humble, meek and patient spirit, was guilty of bitterly censuring his three friends, as wicked, vile hypocrites. Job xvi. 9, 10, 11, "He teareth me in his wrath who hateth me, he gnasheth upon me with his teeth; mine enemy sharpeneth his eyes upon me: they have gaped upon me with their mouth. God hath delivered me to the ungodly and turned me over into the

nands of the wicked." So he is very positive in it that they are hypocrites, and shall be miserably destroyed as such, in the next chapter, ver. 2, 3, 4: "Are there not mockers with me? And doth not mine eye continue in their provocation? Lay down now, put me in surety with thee; who is he that will strike hands with me? For thou hast hid their heart from understanding: therefore shalt thou not exalt them." And again, ver. 8, 9, 10: "Upright men shall be astonished at this, and the innocent shall stir himself against the hypocrite: the righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger. But as for you all, do you return and come now: for I cannot find one wise man (i. e. one good man) among you."

Thus I think the errors and irregularities that attend this work, may be accounted for, from the consideration of the infirmity and weakness and common corruption of mankind, together with the circumstances of the work, though we should suppose it to be the work of God. And it would not be a just objection in any to say, if these powerful impressions and great affections are from the Spirit of God, why does not the same Spirit give strength of understanding and capacity in proportion, to those persons that are the subjects of them; so that strong affections may not, through their error, drive them to an irregular and sinful conduct? For I do not know that God has anywhere obliged himself to do it. The end of the influences of God's Spirit is to make men spiritually knowing, wise to salvation, which is the most excellent wisdom; and he has also appointed means for our gaining such degrees of other knowledge as we need, to conduct ourselves regularly, which means should be carefully used: but the end of the influence of the Spirit of God is not to increase men's natural capacities, nor has God obliged himself immediately to increase civil prudence in proportion to the degrees of spiritual light.

If we consider the errors that attend this work, not only as from man, and his infirmity, but also as from God, and by his permission and disposal, they are not strange, upon the supposition of its being, as to the substance of it, a work of God. If God intends this great revival of religion to be the dawning, or a forerunner of a happy state of his church on earth, it may be an instance of the divine wisdom, in the beginning of it, to suffer so many irregularities and errors in conduct, to which he knew men in their present weak state, were most exposed, under great religious affections, and when animated with great zeal. For it will be very likely to be of excellent benefit to his church, in the continuance and progress of the work afterwards: their experience in the first setting out, of the mischievous consequences of these errors, and smarting for them in the beginning, may be a happy defence to them afterwards, for many generations, from these errors, which otherwise they might continually be exposed to. As when David and all Israel went about to bring back the ark into the midst of the land, after it had been long absent, first in the land of the Philistines, and then in Kirjathjearim, in the utmost borders of the land; they at first sought not the Lord after the due order, and they smarted for their error; but this put them upon studying the law, and more thoroughly acquainting themselves with the mind and will of God, and seeking and serving him with greater circumspection; and the consequence was glorious, viz., their seeking God in such a manner as was accepted of him; and the ark of God's ascending into the heights of Zion, with those great and extraordinary rejoicings of the king and all the people, without any frown or rebuke from God intermixed; and God's dwelling thenceforth in the midst of the people, to those glorious purposes that are expressed in the 68th Psalm.

And it is very analogous to the manner of God's dealing with his people, to permit a great deal of error, and suffer the infirmity of his people much to appear, in the beginning of a glorious work of his grace for their felicity, to teach them what they be, to humble them, and fit them for that glorious prosperity he is about to advance them to, and the more to secure to himself the honor of such a glorious work: for by man's exceeding weakness appearing in the beginning of it, it is evident that God does not lay the foundation of it in man's strength or wisdom.

And as we need not wonder at the errors that attend this work, if we look at the hand of men that are guilty of them, and the hand of God in permitting them, so neither shall we see cause to wonder at them, if we consider them with regard to the hand that Satan has in them. For as the work is much greater than any other outpouring of the Spirit that ever has been in New England, so no wonder that the devil is more alarmed and enraged, and exerts himself more vigorously against it, and does more powerfully endeavor to tempt and mislead those that are the subjects of it, or are its promoters.

Whatever imprudences there have been, and whatever sinful irregularities; whatever vehemence of the passions, and heats of the imagination, transports and ecstasies; and whatever error in judgment, and indiscreet zeal; and whatever outcries, and faintings, and agitations of body; yet it is manifest and notorious, that there has been of late a very uncommon influence upon the minds of a very great part of the inhabitants of New England, from one end of the land to the other, that has been attended with the following effects, viz., a great increase of a spirit of seriousness, and sober consideration of the things of the eternal world; a disposition to hearken to any thing that is said of things of this nature, with attention and affection; a disposition to treat matters of religion with solemnity, and as matters of great importance; a disposition to make these things the subject of conversation; and a great disposition to hear the word of God preached, and to take all opportunities in order to it; and to attend on the public worship of God, and all external duties of religion in a more solemn and decent manner; so that there is a remarkable and general alteration in the face of New England in these respects: multitudes in all parts of the land, of vain, thoughtless, regardless persons are quite changed, and become serious and considerate: there is a vast increase of concern for the salvation of the precious soul, and of that inquiry, *What shall I do to be saved?* The hearts of multitudes have been greatly taken off from the things of the world, its profits, pleasures and honors; and there has been a great increase of sensibleness and tenderness of conscience: multitudes in all parts have had their consciences awakened, and have been made sensible of the pernicious nature and consequences of sin, and what a dreadful thing it is to lie under guilt and the displeasure of God, and to live without peace and reconciliation with him: they have also been awakened to a sense of the shortness and uncertainty of life, and the reality of another world and future judgment, and of the necessity of an interest in Christ: they are more afraid of sin, more careful and inquisitive that they may know what is contrary to the mind and will of God, that they may avoid it, and what he requires of them, that they may do it; more careful to guard against temptations, more watchful over their own hearts, earnestly desirous of being informed what are the means that God has directed to, for their salvation, and diligent in the use of the means that God has appointed in his word, in order to it.—Many very stupid, senseless sinners, and persons of a vain mind, have been greatly awakened. There is a strange alteration almost all over New England amongst young people: by a powerful, invisible influ-

ence on their minds, they have been brought to forsake those things in a general way, as it were at once, that they were extremely fond of, and greatly addicted to, and that they seemed to place the happiness of their lives in, and that nothing before could induce them to forsake; as their frolicking, vain company keeping, night walking, their mirth and jollity, their impure language, and lewd songs; in vain did ministers preach against those things before, and in vain were laws made to restrain them, and in vain was all the vigilance of magistrates and civil officers; but now they have almost everywhere dropped them as it were of themselves. And there is a great alteration amongst old and young as to drinking, tavern haunting, profane speaking, and extravagance in apparel. Many notoriously vicious persons have been reformed, and become externally quite new creatures: some that are wealthy, and of a fashionable, gay education; some great beaus and fine ladies, that seemed to have their minds swallowed up with nothing but the vain shows and pleasures of the world, have been wonderfully altered, and have relinquished these vanities, and are become serious, mortified and humble in their conversation. It is astonishing to see the alteration that is in some towns, where before was but little appearance of religion, or any thing but vice and vanity: and so remote was all that was to be seen or heard amongst them from any thing that savored of vital piety or serious religion, or that had any relation to it, that one would have thought, if they had judged only by what appeared in them, that they had been some other species from the serious and religious, which had no concern with another world, and whose natures were not made capable of those things that appertain to Christian experience, and pious conversation; especially was it thus among young persons: and now they are transformed into another sort of people; their former vain, worldly and vicious conversation and dispositions seem to be forsaken, and they are as it were, gone over to a new world: their thoughts, and their talk and their concern, affections, and inquiries, are now about the favor of God, an interest in Christ, a renewed, sanctified heart, and a spiritual blessedness, and acceptance and happiness in a future world. And through the greater part of New England, the Holy Bible is in much greater esteem and use than it used to be; the great things that are contained in it are much more regarded, as things of the greatest consequence, and are much more the subjects of meditation and conversation; and other books of piety that have long been of established reputation, as the most excellent, and most tending to promote true godliness, have been abundantly more in use: the Lord's day is more religiously observed: and abundance has been lately done at making up differences, and confessing faults one to another, and making restitution; probably more within these two years, than was done in thirty years before: it has been so undoubtedly in many places. And surprising has been the power of that spirit that has been poured out on the land, in many instances, to destroy old grudges, and make up long continued breaches, and to bring those that seemed to be in a confirmed irreconcilable alienation, to embrace each other in a sincere and entire amity.

Great numbers under this influence have been brought to a deep sense of their own sinfulness and vileness: the sinfulness of their lives, the heinousness of their disregard of the authority of the great God, and the heinousness of their living in contempt of a Saviour: they have lamented their former negligence of their souls, and neglecting and losing precious time. Their sins of life have been extraordinarily set before them; and they have also had a great sense of their sins of heart; their hardness of heart, and enmity against that which is good, and proneness to all evil; and also of the worthlessness of their own re-

ligious performances, how unworthy their prayers, praises, and all that they did in religion, was to be regarded of God: and it has been a common thing that persons have had such a sense of their own sinfulness, that they have thought themselves to be the worst of all, and that none ever was so vile as they: and many seem to have been greatly convinced that they were utterly unworthy of any mercy at the hands of God, however miserable they were, and though they stood in extreme necessity of mercy; and that they deserved nothing but eternal burnings: and have been sensible that God would be altogether just and righteous in inflicting endless damnation upon them, at the same time that they have had an exceeding affecting sense of the dreadfulness of such endless torments, and have apprehended themselves to be greatly in danger of them. And many have been deeply affected with a sense of their own ignorance and blindness, and exceeding helplessness, and so of their extreme need of the divine pity and help. And so far as we are worthy to be credited one by another, in what we say (and persons of good understanding and sound mind, and known and experienced probity, have a right to be believed by their neighbors, when they speak of things that fall under their observation and experience), multitudes in *New England* have lately been brought to a new and great conviction of the truth and certainty of the things of the gospel; to a firm persuasion that Christ Jesus is the Son of God, and the great and only Saviour of the world; and that the great doctrines of the gospel touching reconciliation by his blood, and acceptance in his righteousness, and eternal life and salvation through him, are matters of undoubted truth; together with a most affecting sense of the excellency and sufficiency of this Saviour, and the glorious wisdom and grace of God shining in this way of salvation; and of the wonders of Christ's dying love, and the sincerity of Christ in the invitations of the gospel, and a consequent affiance and sweet rest of soul in Christ, as a glorious Saviour, a strong rock and high tower, accompanied with an admiring and exalting apprehension of the glory of the divine perfections, God's majesty, holiness, sovereign grace, &c., with a sensible, strong and sweet love to God, and delight in him, far surpassing all temporal delights, or earthly pleasures; and a rest of soul in him as a portion and the fountain of all good, attended with an abhorrence of sin, and self-loathing for it, and earnest longings of soul after more holiness and conformity to God, with a sense of the great need of God's help in order to holiness of life; together with a most dear love to all that are supposed to be the children of God, and a love to mankind in general, and a most sensible and tender compassion for the souls of sinners, and earnest desires of the advancement of Christ's kingdom in the world. And these things have appeared to be in many of them abiding, now for many months, yea, more than a year and a half; with an abiding concern to live a holy life, and great complaints of remaining corruption, longing to be more free from the body of sin and death. And not only do these effects appear in new converts, but great numbers of those that were formerly esteemed the most sober and pious people, have, under the influence of this work, been greatly quickened, and their hearts renewed with greater degrees of light, renewed repentance and humiliation, and more lively exercises of faith, love and joy in the Lord. Many, as I am well knowing, have of late been remarkably engaged to watch, and strive, and fight against sin, and cast out every idol and sell all for Christ, and give up themselves entirely to God, and make a sacrifice of every worldly and carnal thing to the welfare and prosperity of their souls. And there has of late appeared in some places an unusual disposition to bind themselves to it in a solemn covenant with God. And now instead of meetings at taverns and drinking houses, and meetings of young people in frolicks and vain

company, the country is full of meetings of all sorts and ages of persons, young and old, men, women and little children, to read and pray, and sing praises, and to converse of the things of God and another world. In very many places the main of the conversation in all companies turns on religion, and things of a spiritual nature. Instead of vain mirth amongst young people, there is now either mourning under a sense of the guilt of sin, or holy rejoicing in Christ Jesus; and instead of their lewd songs, are now to be heard from them, songs of praises to God, and the Lamb that was slain to redeem them by his blood. And there has been this alteration abiding on multitudes all over the land, for a year and a half, without any appearance of a disposition to return to former vice and vanity. And under the influences of this work, there have been many of the remains of those wretched people and dregs of mankind, the poor Indians, that seemed to be next to a state of brutality, and with whom, till now, it seemed to be to little more purpose to use endeavors for their instruction and awakening, than with the beasts; whose minds have now been strangely opened to receive instruction, and have been deeply affected with the concerns of their precious souls, and have reformed their lives, and forsaken their former stupid barbarous and brutish way of living; and particularly that sin to which they have been so exceedingly addicted, their drunkenness; and are become devout and serious persons; and many of them to appearance brought truly and greatly to delight in the things of God, and to have their souls very much engaged and entertained with the great things of the gospel. And many of the poor negroes also have been in like manner wrought upon and changed. And the souls of very many little children have been remarkably enlightened, and their hearts wonderfully affected and enlarged, and their mouths opened, expressing themselves in a manner far beyond their years, and to the just astonishment of those that have heard them; and some of them from time to time, for many months, greatly and delightfully affected with the glory of divine things, and the excellency and love of the Redeemer, with their hearts greatly filled with love to and joy in him, and have continued to be serious and pious in their behavior.

The divine power of this work has marvellously appeared in some instances I have been acquainted with, in supporting and fortifying the heart under great trials, such as the death of children, and extreme pain of body; wonderfully maintaining the serenity, calmness and joy of the soul, in an immovable rest in God, and sweet resignation to him. There also have been instances of some that have been the subjects of this work, that under the blessed influences of it, have, in such a calm, bright and joyful frame of mind, been carried through the valley of the shadow of death.

And now let us consider.——Is it not strange that in a Christian, orthodox country, and such a land of light as this is, there should be many at a loss whose work this is, whether the work of God or the work of the devil? Is it not a shame to New England that such a work should be much doubted of here? Need we look over the histories of all past times, to see if there be not some circumstances and external appearances that attend this work, that have been formerly found amongst enthusiasts? Whether the Montanists had not great transports of joy, and whether the French Prophets had not agitations of body? Blessed be God! He does not put us to the toil of such inquiries. We need not say, Who shall ascend into heaven, to bring us down something whereby to judge of this work? Nor does God send us beyond the seas, nor into past ages, to obtain a rule that shall determine and satisfy us. But we have a rule near at hand, a sacred book that God himself has put into our hands, with clear and infallible marks, sufficient to resolve us in things of this nature; which

book I think we must reject, not only in some particular passages, but in the substance of it, if we reject such a work as has now been described, as not being the work of God. The whole tenor of the gospel proves it; all the notion of religion that the Scripture gives us confirms it.

I suppose there is scarcely a minister in this land, but from Sabbath to Sabbath used to pray that God would pour out his Spirit, and work a reformation and revival of religion in the country, and turn us from our intemperance, profaneness, uncleanness, worldliness and other sins; and we have kept from year to year days of public fasting and prayer to God, to acknowledge our backslidings, and humble ourselves for our sins, and to seek of God forgiveness and reformation: and now when so great and extensive a reformation is so suddenly and wonderfully accomplished, in those very things that we have sought to God for, shall we not acknowledge it? Or when we do, do it with great coldness, caution and reserve, and scarcely take any notice of it in our public prayers and praises, or mention it but slightly and cursorily, and in such a manner as carries an appearance as though we would contrive to say as little of it as ever we could, and were glad to pass from it? And that because (although, indeed there be such a work attended with all these glorious effects, yet) the work is attended with a mixture of error, imprudences, darkness and sin; because some persons are carried away with impressions, and are indiscreet, and too censorious with their zeal; and because there are high transports of religious affection: and because of some effects on persons' bodies that we do not understand the reason of?

I have been particularly acquainted with many persons that have been the subjects of the high and extraordinary transports of the present day; and in the highest transports of any of the instances that I have been acquainted with, and where the affections of admiration, love and joy, so far as another could judge, have been raised to a higher pitch than in any other instances I have observed or been informed of, the following things have been united, viz., a very frequent dwelling for some considerable time together, in such views of the glory of the divine perfections, and Christ's excellencies, that the soul in the mean time has been as it were perfectly overwhelmed, and swallowed up with light and love, and a sweet solace, rest and joy of soul, that was altogether unspeakable; and more than once continuing for five or six hours together, without any interruption, in that clear and lively view or sense of the infinite beauty and amiableness of Christ's person, and the heavenly sweetness of his excellent and transcendent love; so that (to use the person's own expressions) the soul remained in a kind of heavenly elysium, and did as it were swim in the rays of Christ's love, like a little mote swimming in the beams of the sun, or streams of his light that come in at a window; and the heart was swallowed up in a kind of glow of Christ's love, coming down from Christ's heart in heaven as a constant stream of sweet light, at the same time the soul all flowing out in love to him; so that there seemed to be a constant flowing and reflowing from heart to heart: the soul dwelt on high, and was lost in God, and seemed almost to leave the body; dwelling in a pure delight that fed and satisfied the soul; enjoying pleasure without the least sting, or any interruption; a sweetness that the soul was lost in; so that (so far as the judgment, and word of a person of discretion may be taken, speaking upon the most deliberate consideration) what was enjoyed in each single minute of the whole space, which was many hours, was undoubtedly worth more than all the outward comfort and pleasure of the whole life put together; and this without being in any trance, or being at all deprived of the exercise of the bodily senses: and the like heavenly delight and unspeakable joy of soul, enjoyed from time to time,

for years together; though not frequently so long together, to such a height: extraordinary views of divine things, and religious affections, being frequently attended with very great effects on the body, nature often sinking under the weight of divine discoveries, the strength of the body taken away, so as to deprive of all ability to stand or speak; sometimes the hands clinched, and the flesh cold, but senses still remaining; animal nature often in a great emotion and agitation, and the soul very often, of late, so overcome with great admiration, and a kind of omnipotent joy, as to cause the person (wholly unavoidably) to leap with all the might, with joy and mighty exultation of soul; the soul at the same time being so strongly drawn towards God and Christ in heaven, that it seemed to the person as though soul and body would, as it were of themselves, of necessity mount up, leave the earth and ascend thither. These effects on the body did not begin now in this wonderful season, that they should be owing to the influence of the example of the times, but about seven years ago; and began in a much higher degree, and greater frequency, near three years ago, when there was no such enthusiastical season, as many account this, but it was a very dead time through the land: they arose from no distemper catched from Mr. Whitefield, or Mr. Tennent, because they began before either of them came into the country; they began, as I said, near three years ago, in a great increase, upon an extraordinary self-dedication, and renunciation of the world, and resignation of all to God, made in a great view of God's excellency, and high exercise of love to him, and rest and joy in him; since which time they have been very frequent; and began in a yet higher degree, and greater frequency, about a year and a half ago, upon another new resignation of all to God, with a yet greater fervency and delight of soul; since which time the body has been very often fainting, with the love of Christ; and began in a much higher degree still, the last winter, upon another resignation and acceptance of God, as the only portion and happiness of the soul, wherein the whole world, with the dearest enjoyments in it, were renounced as dirt and dung, and all that is pleasant and glorious, and all that is terrible in this world, seemed perfectly to vanish into nothing, and nothing to be left but God, in whom the soul was perfectly swallowed up, as in an infinite ocean of blessedness: since which time there have often been great agitations of body, and an unavoidable leaping for joy; and the soul as it were dwelling almost without interruption, in a kind of paradise; and very often, in high transports, disposed to speak of those great and glorious things of God and Christ, and the eternal world, that are in view, to others that are present, in a most earnest manner, and with a loud voice, so that it is next to impossible to avoid it: these effects on the body not arising from any bodily distemper or weakness, because the greatest of all have been in a good state of health. This great rejoicing has been a rejoicing with trembling, i. e., attended with a deep and lively sense of the greatness and majesty of God, and the person's own exceeding littleness and vileness: spiritual joys in this person never were attended, either formerly or lately, with the least appearance of any laughter or lightness of countenance, or manner of speaking; but with a peculiar abhorrence of such appearances in spiritual rejoicings, especially since joys have been greatest of all: these high transports when they have been past, have had abiding effects in the increase of the sweetness, rest and humility that they have left upon the soul; and a new engagedness of heart to live to God's honor, and watch and fight against sin. And these things not in one that is in the giddy age of youth, nor in a new convert, and unexperienced Christian, but in one that was converted above twenty-seven years ago; and neither converted, nor educated in that enthusiastical

town of Northampton (as some may be ready to call it), but in a town and family that none that I know of suspected of enthusiasm; and in a Christian that has been long, in an uncommon manner, growing in grace, and rising, by very sensible degrees, to higher love to God, and weanedness from the world, and mastery over sin and temptation, through great trials and conflicts, and long continued struggling and fighting with sin, and earnest and constant prayer and labor in religion, and engagedness of mind in the use of all means, attended with a great exactness of life: which growth has been attended, not only with a great increase of religious affections, but with a wonderful alteration of outward behavior, in many things, visible to those who are most intimately acquainted, so as lately to have become as it were a new person; and particularly in living so much more above the world, and in a greater degree of steadfastness and strength in the way of duty and self-denial, maintaining the Christian conflict against temptations, and conquering from time to time under great trials; persisting in an unmoved, untouched calm and rest, under the changes and accidents of time. The person had formerly, in lower degrees of grace, been subject to unsteadiness, and many ups and downs, in the frame of mind; the mind being under great disadvantages, through a vapory habit of body, and often subject to melancholy, and at times almost overborne with it, it having been so even from early youth: but strength of grace, and divine light has of a long time, wholly conquered these disadvantages, and carried the mind in a constant manner, quite above all such effects of vapors. Since that resignation spoken of before, made near three years ago, every thing of that nature seems to be overcome and crushed by the power of faith and trust in God, and resignation to him; the person has remained in a constant uninterrupted rest, and humble joy in God, and assurance of his favor, without one hour's melancholy or darkness, from that day to this; vapors have had great effects on the body, such as they used to have before, but the soul has been always out of their reach. And this steadfastness and constancy has remained through great outward changes and trials; such as times of the most extreme pain, and apparent hazard of immediate death. What has been felt in late great transports is known to be nothing new in kind, but to be of the same nature with what was felt formerly, when a little child of about five or six years of age; but only in a vastly higher degree. These transporting views and rapturous affections are not attended with any enthusiastic disposition, to follow impulses, or any supposed prophetical revelations; nor have they been observed to be attended with any appearance of spiritual pride, but very much of a contrary disposition, an increase of a spirit of humility and meekness, and a disposition in honor to prefer others: and it is worthy to be remarked, that at a time remarkably distinguished from all others, wherein discoveries and holy affections were evidently at the greatest height that ever happened, the greatness and clearness of divine light being overwhelming, and the strength and sweetness of divine love altogether overpowering, which began early in the morning of the holy Sabbath, and lasted for days together, melting all down in the deepest humility and poverty of spirit, reverence and resignation, and the sweetest meekness, and universal benevolence; I say, it is worthy to be observed, that there were these two things in a remarkable manner felt at that time, viz., a peculiar sensible aversion to a judging of others that were professing Christians of good standing in the visible church, that they were not converted, or with respect to their degrees of grace; or at all intermeddling with that matter, so much as to determine against and condemn others in the thought of the heart; it appearing hateful, as not agreeing with that lamblike humility, meekness, gentleness and charity, which the

soul then, above other times, saw the beauty of, and felt a disposition to. The disposition that was then felt was, on the contrary to prefer others to self, and to hope that they saw more of God and loved him better; though before, under smaller discoveries, and feebler exercises of divine affection, there had been felt a disposition to censure and condemn others. And another thing that was felt at that time, was a very great sense of the importance of moral social duties, and how great a part of religion lay in them: there was such a new sense and conviction of this beyond what had been before, that it seemed to be as it were a clear discovery then made to the soul: but in general there has been a very great increase of a sense of these two things, as divine views and divine love have increased.

The things already mentioned have been attended also with the following things, viz., an extraordinary sense of the awful majesty, and greatness of God, so as oftentimes to take away the bodily strength; a sense of the holiness of God, as of a flame infinitely pure and bright, so as sometimes to overwhelm soul and body; a sense of the piercing all-seeing eye of God, so as sometimes to take away the bodily strength; and an extraordinary view of the infinite terribleness of the wrath of God, which has very frequently been strongly impressed on the mind, together with a sense of the ineffable misery of sinners that are exposed to this wrath, that has been overbearing: sometimes the exceeding pollution of the person's own heart, as a sink of all manner of abomination, and a nest of vipers, and the dreadfulness of an eternal hell of God's wrath, opened to view both together; with a clear view of a desert of that misery; without the least degree of divine pity, and that by the pollution of the best duties; yea, only by the pollution and irreverence, and want of humility that attended once speaking of the holy name of God, when done in the best manner that ever it was done; the strength of the body very often taken away with a deep mourning for sin, as committed against so holy and good a God, sometimes with an affecting sense of actual sin, sometimes especially indwelling sin, sometimes the consideration of the sin of the heart as appearing in a particular thing, as for instance, in that there was no greater forwardness and readiness to self-denial for God and Christ, that had so denied himself for us; yea, sometimes the consideration of sin that was in only speaking one word concerning the infinitely great and holy God, has been so affecting as to overcome the strength of nature: a very great sense of the certain truth of the great things revealed in the gospel; an overwhelming sense of the glory of the work of redemption, and the way of salvation by Jesus Christ; the glorious harmony of the divine attributes appearing therein, as that wherein mercy and truth are met together, and righteousness and peace have kissed each other; a sight of the fulness and glorious sufficiency of Christ, that has been so affecting as to overcome the body: a constant immovable trust in God through Christ, with a great sense of his strength and faithfulness, the sureness of his covenant, and the immutability of his promises, so that the everlasting mountains and perpetual hills have appeared as mere shadows to these things: sometimes the sufficiency and faithfulness of God as the covenant God of his people, appearing in these words, I AM THAT I AM, in so affecting a manner as to overcome the body: a sense of the glorious, unsearchable, unerring wisdom of God in his works, both of creation and providence, so as to swallow up the soul, and overcome the strength of the body: a sweet rejoicing of soul at the thoughts of God's being infinitely and unchangeably happy, and an exulting gladness of heart that God is self-sufficient, and infinitely above all dependence, and reigns over all, and does his will with absolute and uncontrollable power and sovereignty; a sense of the

glory of the Holy Spirit, as the great comforter, so as to overwhelm both soul and body; only mentioning the word the Comforter, has immediately taken away all strength; that word, as the person expressed it, seemed great enough to fill heaven and earth: a most vehement and passionate desire of the honor and glory of God's name; a sensible, clear and constant preference of it, not only to the person's own temporal interest, but spiritual comfort in this world; and a willingness to suffer the hidings of God's face, and to live and die in darkness and horror if God's honor should require it, and to have no other reward for it but that God's name should be glorified, although so much of the sweetness of the light of God's countenance had been experienced: a great lamenting of ingratitude, and the lowness of the degree of love to God, so as to deprive of bodily strength; and very often vehement longings and faintings after more love to Christ, and greater conformity to him; especially longing after these two things, viz., to be more perfect in humility, and adoration; the flesh and heart, seems often to cry out for a lying low before God, and adoring him with greater love and humility: the thoughts of the perfect humility with which the saints in heaven worship God, and fall down before his throne, have often overcome the body, and set it into a great agitation. A great delight in singing praises to God and Jesus Christ, and longing that this present life may be, as it were, one continued song of praise to God; longing, as the person expressed it, to sit and sing this life away; and an overcoming pleasure in the thoughts of spending an eternity in that exercise; a living by faith to a great degree; a constant and extraordinary distrust of our own strength and wisdom; a great dependence on God for his help, in order to the performance of any thing to God's acceptance, and being restrained from the most horrid sins, and running upon God, even on his neck, and on the thick bosses of his bucklers: such a sense of the black ingratitude of true saints' coldness and deadness in religion, and their setting their hearts on the things of this world, as to overcome the bodily frame: a great longing that all the children of God might be lively in religion, fervent in their love, and active in the service of God; and when there have been appearances of it in others, rejoicing so in beholding the pleasing sight, that the joy of soul has been too great for the body: taking pleasure in the thoughts of watching and striving against sin, and fighting through the way to heaven, and filling up this life with hard labor, and bearing the cross for Christ, as an opportunity to give God honor; not desiring to rest from labors till arrived in heaven, but abhorring the thoughts of it, and seeming astonished that God's own children should be backward to strive and deny themselves for God: earnest longings that all God's people might be clothed with humility and meekness, like the Lamb of God, and feel nothing in their hearts but love and compassion to all mankind; and great grief when any thing to the contrary seems to appear in any of the children of God, as any bitterness or fierceness of zeal, or censoriousness, or reflecting uncharitably upon others, or disputing with any appearance of heat of spirit; a deep concern for the good of others' souls; a melting compassion to those that looked on themselves as in a state of nature, and to saints under darkness, so as to cause the body to faint; a universal benevolence to mankind, with a longing as it were to embrace the whole world in the arms of pity and love; ideas of suffering from enemies, the utmost conceivable rage and cruelty, with a disposition felt to fervent love and pity in such a case, so far as it could be realized in thought; fainting with pity to the world that lies in ignorance and wickedness; sometimes a disposition felt to a life given up to mourning alone in a wilderness over a lost and miserable world; compassion towards them being often to that degree, that would allow

of no support or rest, but in going to God, and pouring out the soul in prayer for them; earnest desires that the work of God, that is now in the land, may be carried on, and that with greater purity, and freedom from all bitter zeal, censoriousness, spiritual pride, hot disputes, &c.—a vehement and constant desire for the setting up of Christ's kingdom through the earth, as a kingdom of holiness, purity, love, peace and happiness to mankind: the soul often entertained with unspeakable delight, and bodily strength overborne, at the thoughts of heaven, as a world of love, where love shall be the saints' eternal food, and they shall dwell in the light of love, and swim in an ocean of love, and where the very air and breath will be nothing but love; love to the people of God, or God's true saints, as such that have the image of Christ, and as those that will in a very little time shine in his perfect image, that has been attended with that endearment and oneness of heart, and that sweetness and ravishment of soul, that has been altogether inexpressible; the strength very often taken away with longings that others might love God more, and serve God better, and have more of his comfortable presence, than the person that was the subject of these longings, desiring to follow the whole world to heaven, or that every one should go before, and be higher in grace and happiness, not by this person's diminution, but by others' increase: a delight in conversing of things of religion, and in seeing Christians together, talking of the most spiritual and heavenly things in religion, in a lively and feeling manner, and very frequently overcome with the pleasure of such conversation: a great sense often expressed, of the importance of the duty of charity to the poor, and how much the generality of Christians come short in the practice of it: a great sense of the need God's ministers have of much of the Spirit of God, at this day especially; and most earnest longings and wrestlings with God for them, so as to take away the bodily strength: the greatest, fullest, longest continued, and most constant assurance of the favor of God, and of a title to future glory, that ever I saw any appearance of in any person, enjoying, especially of late (to use the person's own expression), *the riches of full assurance:* formerly longing to die with something of impatience, but lately, since that resignation forementioned about three years ago, an uninterrupted entire resignation to God with respect to life or death, sickness or health, ease or pain, which has remained unchanged and unshaken, when actually under extreme and violent pains, and in times of threatenings of immediate death; but though there be this patience and submission, yet the thoughts of death and the day of judgment are always exceeding sweet to the soul: this resignation is also attended with a constant resignation of the lives of dearest earthly friends, and sometimes when some of their lives have been imminently threatened; often expressing the sweetness of the liberty of having wholly left the world, and renounced all for God, and having nothing but God, in whom is an infinite fulness. These things have been attended with a constant sweet peace and calm and serenity of soul, without any cloud to interrupt it; a continual rejoicing in all the works of God's hands, the works of nature, and God's daily works of providence, all appearing with a sweet smile upon them; a wonderful access to God by prayer, as it were seeing him, and sensibly immediately conversing with him, as much oftentimes (to use the person's own expressions), as if Christ were here on earth, sitting on a visible throne, to be approached to and conversed with; frequent, plain, sensible and immediate answers of prayer; all tears wiped away; all former troubles and sorrows of life forgotten, and all sorrow and sighing fled away, excepting grief for past sins, and for remaining corruption, and that Christ is loved no more, and that God is no more honored in the world, and a compassionate grief towards fellow creatures; a daily sen-

sible doing and suffering every thing for God, for a long time past, eating for God, and working for God, and sleeping for God, and bearing pain and trouble for God, and doing all as the service of love, and so doing it with a continual uninterrupted cheerfulness, peace and joy. Oh how good, said the person once, is it to work for God in the day time, and at night to lie down under his smiles! High experiences and religious affections in this person have not been attended with any disposition at all to neglect the necessary business of a secular calling, to spend the time in reading and prayer, and other exercises of devotion; but worldly business has been attended with great alacrity, as part of the service of God: the person declaring that it being done thus, it is found to be as good as prayer. These things have been accompanied with an exceeding concern and zeal for moral duties, and that all professors may with them adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour; and an uncommon care to perform relative and social duties, and a noted eminence in them; a great inoffensiveness of life and conversation in the sight of others; a great meekness, gentleness, and benevolence of spirit and behavior; and a great alteration in those things that formerly used to be the person's failings; seeming to be much overcome and swallowed up by the late great increase of grace, to the observation of those that are most conversant and most intimately acquainted: in times of the brightest light and highest flights of love and joy, finding no disposition to any opinion of being now perfectly free from sin (agreeable to the notion of the Wesleys and their followers, and some other high pretenders to spirituality in these days), but exceedingly the contrary: at such times especially, seeing how loathsome and polluted the soul is, soul and body and every act and word appearing like rottenness and corruption in that pure and holy light of God's glory; not slighting instruction or means of grace any more for having had great discoveries; on the contrary, never more sensible of the need of instruction than now. And one thing more may be added, viz., that these things have been attended with a particular dislike of placing religion much in dress, and spending much zeal about those things that in themselves are matters of indifference, or an affecting to show humility and devotion by a mean habit, or a demure and melancholy countenance, or any thing singular and superstitious.

Now if such things are enthusiasm, and the fruits of a distempered brain, let my brain be evermore possessed of that happy distemper! If this be distraction, I pray God that the world of mankind may be all seized with this benign, meek, beneficent, beatifical, glorious distraction! If agitations of body were found in the French prophets, and ten thousand prophets more, it is little to their purpose who bring it as an objection against such a work as this, unless their purpose be to disprove the whole of the Christian religion. The great affections and high transports that others have lately been under, are in general of the same kind with those in the instance that has been given, though not to so high a degree, and many of them, not so pure and unmixed, and so well regulated. I have had opportunity to observe many instances here and elsewhere; and though there are some instances of great affections in which there has been a great mixture of nature with grace, and in some, a sad degenerating of religious affections; yet there is that uniformity observable, that it is easy to be seen that in general it is the same spirit from whence the work in all parts of the land has originated. And what notions have they of religion, that reject what has been described as not true religion? What shall we find to answer those expressions in Scripture, *The peace of God that passeth all understanding: rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory, in believing in and loving an unseen Saviour: all joy and peace in believing: God's shining into our hearts, to give*

he light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; with open face, beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, and being changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord: having the love of God shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost given to us: having the Spirit of God, and of glory, rest upon us: a being called out of darkness into marvellous light; and having the day star arise in our hearts: I say, if those things that have been mentioned, do not answer these expressions, what else can we find out that does answer them? Those that do not think such things as these to be the fruits of the true Spirit, would do well to consider what kind of spirit they are waiting and praying for, and what sort of fruits they expect he should produce when he comes. I suppose it will generally be allowed that there is such a thing as a glorious outpouring of the Spirit of God to be expected, to introduce very joyful and glorious times upon religious accounts; times wherein holy love and joy will be raised to a great height in true Christians: but if those things that have been mentioned be rejected, what is left that we can find wherewith to patch up a notion, or form an idea, of the high, blessed, joyful religion of these times? What is that any have a notion of, that is very sweet, excellent and joyful, of a religious nature, that is entirely of a different nature from these things?

Those that are waiting for the fruits in order to determine whether this be the work of God or no, would do well to consider two things: 1. What they are waiting for: whether it be not this; to have this wonderful religious influence that is on the minds of people over and past, and then to see how they will behave themselves. That is, to have grace subside, and the actings of it in a great measure to cease, and to have persons grow cold and dead, and then to see whether after that they will behave themselves with that exactness and brightness of conversation, that is to be expected of lively Christians, or those that are in the vigorous exercises of grace.—There are many that will not be satisfied with any exactness or laboriousness in religion now, while persons have their minds much moved, and their affections are high; for they lay it to their flash of affection, and heat of zeal, as they call it; they are waiting to see whether they will carry themselves as well as when these affections are over: that is, they are waiting to have persons sicken and lose their strength, that they may see whether they will then behave themselves like healthy strong men. I would desire that they would also consider whether they be not waiting for more than is reasonably to be expected, supposing this to be really a great work of God, and much more than has been found in former great outpourings of the Spirit of God, that have been universally acknowledged in the Christian church? Do not they expect fewer instances of apostasy, and evidences of hypocrisy in professors, and those that for the present seem to be under the influences of the Spirit, than were after that great outpouring of the Spirit in the apostles' days, or that which was in the time of the reformation? And do not they stand prepared to make a mighty argument of it against this work, if there should be *half* so many? And 2. They would do well to consider how *long* they will wait to see the good fruit of this work, before they will determine in favor of it. Is not their waiting unlimited? The visible fruit that is to be expected of a pouring out of the Spirit of God on a country, is a visible reformation in that country: what reformation has lately been brought to pass in New England, by this work, has been before observed. And has it not continued long enough already, to give reasonable satisfaction? If God cannot work on the hearts of a people after such a manner, as to show his hand so plainly, as reasonably to expect it should be acknowledged in a year and a

half, or two years time; yet surely it is unreasonable, that our expectations and demands should be unlimited, and our waiting without any bounds.

As there is the clearest evidence, from those things that have been observed, that this is the work of God, so it is evident that it is a very great and wonderful, and exceeding glorious work of God. This is certain, that it is a great and wonderful event, a strange revolution, an unexpected, surprising overturning of things, suddenly brought to pass; such as never has been seen in New England, and scarce ever has been heard of in any land. Who that saw the state of things in New England a few years ago, the state that it was settled in, and the way that we had been so long going on in, would have thought that in so little a time there would be such a change? This is undoubtedly either a very great work of God, or a great work of the devil, as to the main substance of it. For though undoubtedly, God and the devil may work together at the same time, and in the same land; and when God is at work, especially if he be very remarkably at work, Satan will, to his utmost endeavor, intrude, and by intermingling his work, darken and hinder God's work; yet God and the devil do not work together in producing the same event, and in effecting the same change in the hearts and lives of men: but it is apparent that there are some things wherein the main substance of this work consists, a certain effect that is produced, and alteration that is made in the apprehensions, affections, dispositions and behavior of men, in which there is a likeness and agreement everywhere: now this I say, is either a wonderful work of God, or a mighty work of the devil; and so is either a most happy event, greatly to be admired and rejoiced in, or a most awful calamity. Therefore if what has been said before, be sufficient to determine it to be as to the main, the work of God, then it must be acknowledged to be a very wonderful and glorious work of God.

Such a work is in its nature and kind, the most glorious of any work of God whatsoever; and is always so spoken of in Scripture. It is the work of redemption (the great end of all other works of God, and of which the work of creation was but a shadow), in the event, success and end of it: it is the work of new creation, that is infinitely more glorious than the old. I am bold to say, that the work of God in the conversion of one soul, considered together with the source, foundation and purchase of it, and also the benefit, end and eternal issue of it, is a more glorious work of God than the creation of the whole material universe; it is the most glorious of God's works, as it above all others manifests the glory of God: it is spoken of in Scripture as that which shows *the exceeding greatness of God's power*, and *the glory and riches of divine grace*, and wherein Christ has the most glorious triumph over his enemies, and wherein God is mightily exalted: and it is a work above all others glorious, as it concerns the happiness of mankind; more happiness, and a greater benefit to man, is the fruit of each single drop of such a shower, than all the temporal good of the most happy revolution in a land or nation amounts to, or all that a people could gain by the conquest of the world.

And as this work is very glorious in its nature, so it is in its degree and circumstances. It will appear very glorious if we consider the unworthiness of the people that are the subjects of it; what obligations God has laid us under by the special privileges we have enjoyed for our souls' good, and the great things God did for us at our first settlement in the land; and how he has followed us with his goodness to this day, and how we have abused his goodness; how long we have been revolting more and more (as all confess), and how very corrupt we were become at last; in how great a degree we had cast off God, and forsaken the fountain of living waters: how obstinate we have been

under all manner of means that God has used with us to reclaim us; how often we have mocked God with hypocritical pretences of humiliation, as in our annual days of public fasting, and other things, while instead of reforming, we only grew worse and worse; how dead a time it was everywhere before this work began: if we consider these things, we shall be most stupidly ungrateful, if we do not acknowledge God's visiting of us as he has done, as an instance of the glorious triumph of free and sovereign grace.

The work is very glorious if we consider the extent of it: being in this respect vastly beyond any former outpouring of the Spirit that ever was known in New England. There has formerly sometimes been a remarkable awakening and success of the means of grace, in some particular congregation; and this used to be much taken notice of, and acknowledged to be glorious, though the towns and congregations round about continued dead; but now God has brought to pass a new thing, he has wrought a great work of this nature, that has extended from one end of the land to the other, besides what has been wrought in other British colonies in America.

The work is very glorious in the great numbers that have to appearance, been turned from sin to God, and so delivered from a wretched captivity to sin and Satan, saved from everlasting burnings, and made heirs of eternal glory. How high an honor, and great reward of their labors, have some eminent persons of note in the church of God, signified that they should esteem it, if they should be made the instruments of the conversion and eternal salvation of but *one* soul! And no greater event than that is thought worthy of great notice in heaven among the hosts of glorious angels, who rejoice and sing on such an occasion; and when there are many thousands of souls thus converted and saved, shall it be esteemed worth but little notice, and be mentioned with coldness and indifference here on earth, by those among whom such a work is wrought?

The work has been very glorious and wonderful in many circumstances and events of it, that have been extraordinary, wherein God has, in an uncommon manner, made his hand visible, and his power conspicuous; as in the extraordinary degrees of awakening, the suddenness of conversions in innumerable instances, in which, though the work was quick, yet the thing wrought is manifestly durable. How common a thing has it been for a great part of a congregation to be at once moved, by a mighty invisible power; and for six, eight, or ten souls to be converted to God (to all appearance), in an exercise, in whom the visible change still continues! How great an alteration has been made in some towns; yea, some populous towns; the change still abiding! And how many very vicious persons have been wrought upon, so as to become visibly new creatures! God has also made his hand very visible, and his work glorious, in the multitudes of little children that have been wrought upon: I suppose there have been some hundreds of instances of this nature of late, any one of which formerly would have been looked upon so remarkable, as to be worthy to be recorded, and published through the land. The work is very glorious in its influences and effects on many that have been very ignorant and barbarous, as I before observed of the Indians and Negroes.

The work is also exceeding glorious in the high attainments of Christians, in the extraordinary degrees of light, love and spiritual joy, that God has bestowed upon great multitudes. In this respect also, the land in all parts has abounded with such instances, any one of which if they had happened formerly, would have been thought worthy to be taken notice of by God's people, throughout the British dominions. The new Jerusalem in this respect has begun to come down from heaven, and perhaps never were more of the prelibations of heaven's glory given upon earth.

There being a great many errors and sinful irregularities mixed with this work of God, arising from our weakness, darkness and corruption, does not hinder this work of God's power and grace from being very glorious. Our follies and sins that we mix, do in some respects manifest the glory of it: the glory of divine power and grace is set off with the greater lustre, by what appears at the same time of the weakness of the earthen vessel. It is God's pleasure that there should be something remarkably to manifest the weakness and unworthiness of the subject, at the same time that he displays the excellency of his power and riches of his grace.—And I doubt not but some of those things that make some of us here on earth to be out of humor, and to look on this work with a sour, displeased countenance, do heighten the songs of the angels, when they praise God and the Lamb for what they see of the glory of God's all-sufficiency, and the efficacy of Christ's redemption. And how unreasonable is it that we should be backward to acknowledge the glory of what God has done, because withal, the devil, and we, in hearkening to him, have done a great deal of mischief!

PART II.

Showing the Obligations that all are under to acknowledge, rejoice in, and promote this Work, and the great Danger of the contrary.

THERE are many things in the word of God, that show that when God remarkably appears in any great work for his church, and against his enemies, it is a most dangerous thing, and highly provoking to God, to be slow and backward to acknowledge and honor God in the work, and to lie still and not to put to a helping hand. Christ's people are in Scripture represented as his army; he is the Lord of Hosts or armies: he is the captain of the host of the Lord, as he called himself when he appeared to Joshua, with a sword drawn in his hand, Joshua v. 13, 14, 15. He is the captain of his people's salvation; and therefore it may well be highly resented if they do not resort to him when he orders his banner to be displayed; or if they refuse to follow him when he blows the trumpet, and gloriously appears going forth against his enemies. God expects that every living soul should have his attention roused on such an occasion, and should most cheerfully yield to the call, and heedfully and diligently obey it; Isa. xviii. 3, "All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, see ye when he lifteth up an ensign on the mountains; and when he bloweth the trumpet, hear ye." Especially should all Israel be gathered after their captain, as we read they were after Ehud, when he blew the trumpet in mount Ephraim, when he had slain Eglon king of Moab, Judg. iii. 27, 28. How severe is the martial law in such a case, when any of an army refuses to obey the sound of a trumpet, and follow his general to the battle! God at such a time appears in peculiar manifestations of his glory, and therefore not to be affected and animated, and to lie still, and refuse to follow God, will be resented as a high contempt of him. If a subject should stand by, and be a spectator of the solemnity of his prince's coronation, and should appear silent and sullen, when all the multitude were testifying their loyalty and joy, with loud acclamations; how greatly would he expose himself to be treated as a rebel, and quickly to perish by the authority of the prince that he refuses to honor!

At a time when God manifests himself in such a great work for his church, there is no such thing as being neuters; there is a necessity of being either for

or against the king that then gloriously appears: as when a king is crowned, and there are public manifestations of joy on that occasion, there is no such thing as standing by as an indifferent spectator; all must appear as loyal subjects, and express their joy on that occasion, or be accounted enemies: so it always is when God, in any great dispensation of his providence, does remarkably set his king on his holy hill of Zion, and Christ in an extraordinary manner comes down from heaven to the earth, and appears in his visible church in a great work of salvation for his people: so it was when Christ came down from heaven in his incarnation, and appeared on earth in his human presence; there was no such thing as being neuters, neither on his side nor against him: those that sat still and said nothing, and did not declare for him, and come and join with him, after he, by his word and works, had given sufficient evidence who he was, were justly looked upon as his enemies; as Christ says, Matt. xii. 30, "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad." So it is in a time when Christ is remarkably spiritually present, as well as when he is bodily present; and when he comes to carry on the work of redemption in the application of it, as well as in the revelation and purchase. If a king should come into one of his provinces, that had been oppressed by its foes, where some of his subjects had fallen off to the enemy, and joined with them against their lawful sovereign and his loyal subjects; I say, if the lawful sovereign himself should come into the province, and should ride forth there against his enemies, and should call upon all that were on his side to come and gather themselves to him; there would be no such thing, in such a case, as standing neuter: they that laid still and staid at a distance would undoubtedly be looked upon and treated as rebels. So in the day of battle, when two armies join, there is no such thing for any present as being of neither party, all must be on one side or the other; and they that are not found with the conqueror in such a case, must expect to have his weapons turned against them, and to fall with the rest of his enemies.

When God manifests himself with such glorious power in a work of this nature, he appears especially determined to put honor upon his Son, and to fulfil his oath that he has sworn to him, that he would make every knee to bow, and every tongue to confess to him. God hath had it much on his heart, from all eternity, to glorify his dear and only begotten Son; and there are some special seasons that he appoints to that end, wherein he comes forth with omnipotent power to fulfil his promise and oath to him; and these times are times of remarkable pouring out of his Spirit, to advance his kingdom; such a day is a day of his power, wherein his people shall be made willing, and he shall rule in the midst of his enemies; these especially are the times wherein God declares his firm decree that his Son shall reign on his holy hill of Zion; and therefore those that at such a time do not kiss the Son, as he then manifests himself, and appears in the glory of his majesty and grace, expose themselves to *perish from the way*, and to be *dashed in pieces with a rod of iron*.

As such a time is a time wherein God eminently *sets his king on his holy hill of Zion*, so it is a time wherein he remarkably fulfils that in Isa. xxviii. 16: "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation." Which the two Apostles Peter and Paul (1 Pet. ii. 6, 7, 8, and Rom. ix. 33) join with that prophecy, Isa. viii. 14, 15, "And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem: and many among them shall stumble and fall, and be broken, and be snared and taken." As signify-

ing that both are fulfilled together. Yea, both are joined together by the prophet Isaiah himself; as you may see in the context of that forementioned, Isa. xxviii. 16. In ver. 13, preceding, it is said, "But the word of the Lord was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little, that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared and taken." And accordingly it always is so, that when Christ is in a peculiar and eminent manner manifested and magnified, by a glorious work of God in his church, as a foundation and sanctuary for some, he is remarkably a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, a gin and a snare to others. They that continue long to stumble, and be offended and ensnared in their minds, at such a great and glorious work of Christ, in God's account, stumble at Christ, and are offended in him; for the work is that by which he makes Christ manifest, and shows his glory, and by which he makes *the stone that the builders refused, to become the head of the corner.* This shows how dangerous it is to continue always stumbling at such a work, forever doubting of it, and forbearing fully to acknowledge it, and give God the glory of it. Such persons are in danger *to go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared and taken,* and to have Christ *a stone of stumbling* to them, that shall be an occasion of their ruin; while he is to others *a sanctuary, and a sure foundation.*

The prophet Isaiah, Isa. xxix. 14, speaks of God's proceeding to do a marvellous work and a wonder, which should stumble and confound the wisdom of the wise and prudent; which the apostle in Acts xiii. 41, applies to the glorious work of salvation wrought in those days by the redemption of Christ, and that glorious outpouring of the Spirit to apply it that followed; the prophet in the context of that place in Isa. xxix., speaking of the same thing, and of the prophets and rulers and seers, those wise and prudent, whose eyes God had closed, says to them, verse 9, "Stay yourselves and wonder." In the original it is, *Be ye slow and wonder.* I leave it to others to consider whether it is not natural to interpret it thus, "Wonder at this marvellous work; let it be a strange thing, a great mystery that you know not what to make of, and that you are very slow and backward to acknowledge, long delaying to come to a determination concerning it." And what persons are in danger of that wonder, and are thus slow to acknowledge God in such a work, we learn by that of the apostle in that forementioned Acts xiii. 41, "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish; for I work a work in your days, a work which you shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you"

The church of Christ is called upon greatly to rejoice, when at any time Christ remarkably appears, coming to his church, to carry on the work of salvation, to enlarge his own kingdom, and to deliver poor souls out of the pit, wherein there is no water, in Zech. ix. 9, 10, 11: "Rejoice greatly O daughter of Zion, shout O daughter of Jerusalem; behold thy king cometh unto thee; he is just and having salvation.—His dominion shall be from sea to sea.—As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant, I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water." Christ was pleased to give a notable typical or symbolical repsesentation of such a great event as is spoken of in that prophecy, in his solemn entry into the literal Jerusalem, which was a type of the church or daughter of Zion, there spoken of; probably intending it as a figure and prelude of that great actual fulfilment of this prophecy, that was to be after his ascension, by the pouring out of the Spirit in the days of the apostles, and that more full accomplishment that should be in the latter ages of the Christian church. We have an account, that when Christ made this his solemn entry into Jerusalem, and the whole multitude of the disciples were rejoic-

ing and praising God with loud voices, for all the mighty works that they had seen, the Pharisees from among the multitude said to Christ, *Master, rebuke thy disciples;* but we are told, Luke xix. 39, 40, Christ "answered and said unto them, I tell you, that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out:" signifying, that if Christ's professing disciples should be unaffected on such an occasion, and should not appear openly to acknowledge and rejoice in the glory of God therein appearing, it would manifest such fearful hardness of heart, so exceeding that of the stones, that the very stones would condemn them. Should not this make those consider, who have held their peace so long since Christ has come to our Zion having salvation, and so wonderfully manifested his glory in this mighty work of his Spirit, and so many of his disciples have been rejoicing and praising God with loud voices?

It must be acknowledged that so great and wonderful a work of God's Spirit, is a work wherein God's hand is remarkably *lifted up*, and wherein he displays his majesty, and shows great favor and mercy to sinners, in the glorious opportunity he gives them; and by which he makes our land to become much more a land of uprightness: therefore that place, Isa. xxvi. 10, 11, shows the great danger of not seeing God's hand, and acknowledging his glory and majesty in such a work: "Let favor be shown to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness he will deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord. Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see; but they shall see, and be ashamed for their envy at the people; yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them."

It is not unlikely that this work of God's Spirit, that is so extraordinary and wonderful, is the dawning, or at least, a prelude of that glorious work of God, so often foretold in Scripture, which in the progress and issue of it shall renew the world of mankind. If we consider how long since, the things foretold, as what should precede this great event have been accomplished; and how long this event has been expected by the church of God, and thought to be nigh by the most eminent men of God in the church; and withal consider what the state of things now is, and has for a considerable time been, in the church of God, and world of mankind, we cannot reasonably think otherwise, than that the beginning of this great work of God must be near. And there are many things that make it probable that this work will begin in America. It is signified that it shall begin in some very remote part of the world, that the rest of the world have no communication with but by navigation, in Isa. lx. 9: "Surely the Isles will wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring my sons from far." It is exceeding manifest that this chapter is a prophecy of the prosperity of the church, in its most glorious state on earth, in the latter days; and I cannot think that any thing else can be here intended but America, by the isles that are afar off, from whence the first born sons of that glorious day shall be brought. Indeed by *the isles*, in prophecies of gospel times, is very often meant *Europe:* it is so in prophecies of that great spreading of the gospel that should be soon after Christ's time, because it was far separated from that part of the world where the church of God had, until then been, by the sea. But this prophecy cannot have respect to the conversion of Europe, in the time of that great work of God, in the primitive ages of the Christian church; for it was not fulfilled then: the isles and ships of Tarshish, thus understood, did not wait for God first; that glorious work did not begin in Europe, but in Jerusalem, and had for a considerable time, been very wonderfully carried on in Asia, before it reached Europe. And as it is not that work of God that is chiefly intended in this chapter, but that more glorious work that should be in

the latter ages of the Christian church, therefore some other part of the world is here intended by the Isles, that should be as Europe then was, far separated from that part of the world where the church had before been, by the sea, and with which it can have no communication but by the ships of Tarshish. And what is chiefly intended is not the British Isles, nor any Isles near the other continent; for they are spoken of as at a great distance from that part of the world where the church had till then been. This prophecy therefore seems plainly to point out America, as the first fruits of that glorious day.

God has made as it were two worlds here below, the old and the new (according to the names they are now called by), two great habitable continents, far separated one from the other; the latter is but newly discovered, it was formerly wholly unknown, from age to age, and is as it were now but newly created: it has been, until of late, wholly the possession of Satan, the church of God having never been in it, as it has been in the other continent, from the beginning of the world. This new world is probably now discovered, that the new and most glorious state of God's church on earth might commence there; that God might in it begin a new world in a spiritual respect, when he creates the *new heavens* and *new earth*.

God has already put that honor upon the other continent, that Christ was born there literally, and there made the *purchase of redemption*: so, as Providence observes a kind of equal distribution of things, it is not unlikely that the great spiritual birth of Christ, and the most glorious *application of redemption* is to begin in this: as the elder sister brought forth Judah, of whom came Christ, and so she was the mother of Christ: but the younger sister, after long barrenness, brought forth Joseph and Benjamin, the beloved children. Joseph, that had the most glorious apparel, the coat of many colors, who was separated from his brethren, and was exalted to such glory out of a dark dungeon, and fed and saved the world, when ready to perish with famine, and was as a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches ran over the wall, and was blessed with all manner of blessings and precious things, of heaven and earth, through the good will of him that dwelt in the bush; and was, as by the horns of a unicorn, to push the people together, to the ends of the earth, i. e., conquer the world. See Gen. xlix. 22, &c., and Deut. xxxiii. 13, &c. And Benjamin, whose mess was five times so great as that of any of his brethren, and to whom Joseph, the type of Christ, gave wealth and raiment far beyond all the rest. Gen. xlv. 22.

The other continent hath slain Christ, and has from age to age shed the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus, and has often been as it were deluged with the church's blood: God has therefore probably reserved the honor of building the glorious temple to the daughter, that has not shed so much blood, when those times of the peace, and prosperity, and glory of the church shall commence, that were typified by the reign of Solomon.

The Gentiles first received the true religion from the Jews: God's church of ancient times had been among them, and Christ was of them: but that there might be a kind of equality in the dispensations of Providence, God has so ordered it, that when the Jews come to be admitted to the benefits of the evangelical dispensation, and to receive their highest privileges of all, they should receive the gospel from the Gentiles. Though Christ was of them, yet they have been guilty of crucifying him; it is therefore the will of God, that that people should not have the honor of communicating the blessings of the kingdom of God in its most glorious state, to the Gentiles, but on the contrary, they shall receive the gospel in the beginning of that glorious day, from the Gentiles. In some analogy to this, I apprehend God's dealings will be with the two continents. America

has received the true religion of the old continent; the church of ancient times has been there, and Christ is from thence: but that there may be an equality, and inasmuch as that continent has crucified Christ, they shall not have the honor of communicating religion in its most glorious state to us, but we to them.

The old continent has been the source and original of mankind, in several respects. The first parents of mankind dwelt there; and there dwelt Noah and his sons; and there the second Adam was born, and was crucified and rose again: and it is probable that, in some measure to balance these things, the most glorious renovation of the world shall originate from the new continent, and the church of God in that respect be from hence. And so it is probable that that will come to pass in spirituals, that has in temporals, with respect to America; that whereas till of late, the world was supplied with its silver and gold and earthly treasures from the old continent, now it is supplied chiefly from the new, so the course of things in spiritual respects will be in like manner turned.

And it is worthy to be noted that America was discovered about the time of the reformation, or but little before: which reformation was the first thing that God did towards the glorious renovation of the world, after it had sunk into the depths of darkness and ruin, under the great antichristian apostasy. So that as soon as this new world is (as it were) created, and stands forth in view, God presently goes about doing some great thing to make way for the introduction of the church's latter day glory, that is to have its first seat in, and is to take its rise from that new world.

It is agreeable to God's manner of working, when he accomplishes any glorious work in the world, to introduce a new and more excellent state of his church, to begin his work where his church had not been till then, and where was no foundation already laid, that the power of God might be the more conspicuous; that the work might appear to be entirely God's, and be more manifestly a creation out of nothing; agreeably to Hos. i. 10: "And it shall come to pass that in the place where it was said unto them, ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, ye are the sons of the living God." When God is about to turn the earth into a Paradise, he does not begin his work where there is some good growth already, but in a wilderness, where nothing grows, and nothing is to be seen but dry sand and barren rocks; that the light may shine out of darkness, and the world be replenished from emptiness, and the earth watered by springs from a droughty desert; agreeably to many prophecies of Scripture, as Isa. xxxii. 15: "Until the Spirit be poured from on high, and the wilderness become a fruitful field." And chap. xli. 18, "I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water: I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle and oil tree: I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine, and the box tree together;" and chap. xliii. 20, "I will give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen." And many other parallel Scriptures might be mentioned.

I observed before, that when God is about to do some great work for his church, his manner is to begin at the lower end; so when he is about to renew the whole habitable earth, it is probable that he will begin in this utmost, meanest, youngest and weakest part of it, where the church of God has been planted last of all; and so the first shall be last, and the last first; and that will be fulfilled in an eminent manner in Isa. xxiv. 16, "From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, even glory to the righteous."

There are several things that seem to me to argue, that when the Sun of Righteousness, the sun of the new heavens and new earth, comes to rise, and *comes forth as the bridegroom* of his church, *rejoicing as a strong man to run his race, having his going forth from the end of heaven, and his circuit to the end of it, that nothing may be hid from the light and heat of it*,* that the sun shall rise in the west, contrary to the course of this world, or the course of things in the old heavens and earth. The course of God's providence shall in that day be so wonderfully altered in many respects, that God will as it were change the course of nature, in answer to the prayers of his church; as God changed the course of nature, and caused the sun to go from the West to the East, when Hezekiah was healed, and God promised to do such great things for his church, to deliver it out of the hand of the king of Assyria, by that mighty slaughter by the angel; which is often used by the prophet Isaiah, as a type of the glorious deliverance of the church from her enemies in the latter days: the resurrection of Hezekiah, the king and captain of the church (as he is called 2 Kings xx. 5), as it were from the dead, is given as an earnest of the church's resurrection and salvation, Isa. xxxviii. 6, and is a type of the resurrection of Christ. At the same time there is a resurrection of the sun, or coming back and rising again from the west, whither it had gone down; which is also a type of the Sun of Righteousness. The sun was brought back ten degrees; which probably brought it to the meridian. The Sun of Righteousness has long been going down from east to west; and probably when the time comes of the church's deliverance from her enemies, so often typified by the Assyrians, the light will rise in the west, until it shines through the world, like the sun in its meridian brightness.

The same seems also to be represented by the course of the waters of the sanctuary, Ezek. xlvii., which was from west to east; which waters undoubtedly represent the Holy Spirit, in the progress of his saving influences, in the latter ages of the world: for it is manifest that the whole of those last chapters of Ezekiel, are concerning the glorious state of the church that shall then be.

And if we may suppose that this glorious work of God shall begin in any part of America, I think if we consider the circumstances of the settlement of New England, it must needs appear the most likely of all American colonies, to be the place whence this work shall principally take its rise.

And if these things are so, it gives more abundant reason to hope that what is now seen in America, and especially in New England, may prove the dawn of that glorious day: and the very uncommon and wonderful circumstances and events of this work, seem to me strongly to argue that God intends it as the beginning or forerunner of something vastly great.

I have thus long insisted on this point, because if these things are so, it greatly manifests how much it behooves us to encourage and promote this work, and how dangerous it will be to forbear so to do.

It is very dangerous for God's professing people to lie still, and not to come to the help of the Lord, whenever he remarkably pours out his Spirit, to carry on the work of redemption in the application of it; but above all when he comes forth in that last and greatest outpouring of his Spirit, to introduce that happy day of God's power and salvation, so often spoken of. That is especially the appointed season of the application of the redemption of Christ: it is

* It is evident that the Holy Spirit, in those expressions in Psal. xix. 4, 5, and 6 verses, has respect to something else besides the natural sun; and that an eye is had to the Sun of Righteousness, that by his light converts the soul, makes wise the simple, enlightens the eyes, and rejoices the heart; and by his preached gospel enlightens and warms the world of mankind. By the Psalmist's own application in verse 7, and the apostle's application of verse 4. in Rom. x. 18.

the proper time of the kingdom of heaven upon earth, the appointed time of Christ's reign: the reign of Satan as god of this world lasts till then: this is the proper time of actual redemption, or new creation, as is evident by Isa. lxv. 17, 18, and lxvi. 12, and Rev. xxi. 1. All the outpourings of the Spirit of God that are before this, are as it were by way of anticipation.

There was indeed a glorious season of the application of redemption, in the first ages of the Christian church, that began at Jerusalem, on the day of pentecost; but that was not the proper time of ingathering; it was only as it were the feast of the first fruits; the ingathering is at the end of the year, or in the last ages of the Christian church, as is represented, Rev. xiv. 14, 15, 16, and will probably as much exceed what was in the first ages of the Christian church, though that filled the Roman empire, as that exceeded all that had been before, under the Old Testament, confined only to the land of Judea.

The great danger of not appearing openly to acknowledge, rejoice in, and promote that great work of God, in bringing in that glorious harvest, is represented in Zech. xiv. 16, 17, 18, 19: "And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left, of all the nations, which come against Jerusalem, shall even go up, from year to year, to worship the king, the Lord of Hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be, that whoso will not come up, of all the families of the earth, unto Jerusalem, to worship the king, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain, there shall be the plague wherewith the Lord will smite the heathen, that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles." Is is evident by all the context, that the glorious day of the church of God in the latter ages of the world, is the time spoken of: the feast of tabernacles here seems to signify that glorious spiritual feast, which God shall then make for his church, the same that is spoken of Isa. xxv. 5, and the great spiritual rejoicings of God's people at that time. There were three great feasts in Israel, at which all the males were appointed to go up to Jerusalem; the feast of the passover; and the feast of the first fruits, or the feast of pentecost; and the feast of ingathering, at the end of the year, or the feast of tabernacles. In the first of these, viz., *the feast of the passover*, was represented the purchase of redemption by Jesus Christ, the paschal Lamb, that was slain at the time of that feast. The other two that followed it, were to represent the two great seasons of the *application* of the purchased redemption: in the former of them, viz., *the feast of the first fruits*, which was called the feast of pentecost, was represented that time of the outpouring of the Spirit, that was in the first ages of the Christian church, for the bringing in the first fruits of Christ's redemption, which began at Jerusalem, on the day of pentecost: the other, which was *the feast of ingathering*, at the end of the year, which the children of Israel were appointed to keep on occasion of their gathering in their corn and their wine, and all the fruit of their land, and was called the *feast of tabernacles*, represented the other more joyful and glorious season of the application of Christ's redemption, which is to be in the latter days; the great day of ingathering of the elect, the proper and appointed time of gathering in God's fruits, when the angel of the covenant shall thrust in his sickle, and gather the harvest of the earth; and the clusters of the vine of the earth shall also be gathered. This was upon many accounts the greatest feast of the three: there were much greater tokens of rejoicing in this feast, than any other: the people then dwelt in booths of green boughs, and were commanded to take boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the

boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook, and to rejoice before the Lord their God: which represents the flourishing, beautiful, pleasant state the church shall be in, rejoicing in God's grace and love, triumphing over all her enemies, at the time typified by this feast. The tabernacle of God was first set up among the children of Israel, at the time of the feast of tabernacles; but in that glorious time of the Christian church, God will above all other times set up his tabernacle amongst men. Rev. xxi. 3, "And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, The tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." The world is supposed to have been created about the time of the year wherein the feast of tabernacles was appointed; so in that glorious time, God will create a new heaven and a new earth. The temple of Solomon was dedicated at the time of the feast of tabernacles, when God descended in a pillar of cloud, and dwelt in the temple; so at this happy time the temple of God shall be gloriously built up in the world, and God shall in a wonderful manner come down from heaven to dwell with his church. Christ is supposed to have been born at the feast of tabernacles; so at the commencement of that glorious day, Christ shall be born; then above all other times shall the *Woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, that is in travail, and pained to be delivered, bring forth her son to rule all nations*, Rev. xii. at the beginning. The feast of tabernacles was the last feast that Israel had in the whole year, before the face of the earth was destroyed by the winter; presently after the rejoicings of that feast were past, a tempestuous season began. Acts xxvii. 9, "Sailing was now dangerous because the feast was now already past." So this great feast of the Christian church will be the last feast she shall have on earth: soon after it is past this lower world will be destroyed. At the feast of tabernacles, Israel left their houses to dwell in booths or green tents, which signifies the great weanedness of God's people from the world, as pilgrims and strangers on the earth, and their great joy therein. Israel were prepared for the feast of tabernacles, by the feast of trumpets, and the day of atonement both on the same month; so way shall be made for the joy of the church of God, in its glorious state on earth, by the extraordinary preaching of the gospel, and deep repentance and humiliation for past sins, and the great and long continued deadness and carnality of the visible church. Christ at the great feast of tabernacles, stood in Jerusalem, *and cried, saying, If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink: he that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living waters:* signifying the extraordinary freedom and riches of divine grace towards sinners, at that day, and the extraordinary measures of the Holy Spirit that shall be then given; agreeable to Rev. xxi. 6, and xxii. 17.

It is threatened here in this 14th chapter of Zech. that those who at that time shall not come to keep this feast; i. e., that shall not acknowledge God's glorious works, and praise his name, and rejoice with his people, but should stand at a distance, as unbelieving and disaffected; *upon them shall be no rain;* and that this shall be the plague wherewith they shall all be smitten; that is, they shall have no share in that shower of divine blessing that shall then descend on the earth, that spiritual rain spoken of, Isa. lxiv. 3. But God would give them over to hardness of heart and blindness of mind.

The curse is yet in a more awful manner denounced against such as shall appear as opposers at that time, ver. 12: "And this shall be the plague, wherewith the Lord shall smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem, their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in

their mouth." Here also in all probability it is a spiritual judgment, or a plague and curse from God upon the soul, rather than upon the body, that is intended; that such persons, who at that time shall oppose God's people in his work, shall in an extraordinary manner be given over to a state of spiritual death and ruin, that they shall remarkably appear dead while alive, and shall be as walking rotten corpses, while they go about amongst men.

The great danger of not joining with God's people at that glorious day is also represented, Isa. lx. 12: "For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted."

Most of the great temporal deliverances that were wrought for Israel of old, as divines and expositors observe, were typical of the great spiritual works of God for the salvation of men's souls, and the deliverance and prosperity of his church, in the days of the gospel; and especially did they represent that greatest of all deliverances of God's church, and chief of God's works, of actual salvation, that shall be in the latter days; which as has been observed is above all others, the appointed time, and proper season of actual redemption of men's souls. But it may be observed that if any appeared to oppose God's work in those great temporal deliverances; or if there were any of his professing people, that on such occasions lay still, and stood at a distance, and did not arise and acknowledge God in his work, and appear to promote it; it was what in a remarkable manner incensed God's anger, and brought his curse upon such persons.

So when God wrought that great work of bringing the children of Israel out of Egypt (which was a type of God's delivering his church out of the spiritual Egypt, at the time of the fall of Antichrist, as is evident by Rev. xi. 8, and xv. 3). How highly did God resent it, when the Amalekites appeared as opposers in that affair! And how dreadfully did he curse them for it! Exod. xvii. 14, 15, 16, "And the Lord said unto Moses, write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua; for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah Nissi; for he said, because the Lord will have war with Amalek, from generation to generation." And accordingly we find that God remembered it a long time after, 1 Sam. xv. 3. And how highly did God resent it in the Moabites and Ammonites, that they did not lend a helping hand, and encourage and promote the affair! Deut. xxiii. 3, 4, "An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord; even to their tenth generation, shall they not enter into the congregation of the Lord forever; because they met you not with bread and with water, in the way when ye came forth out of Egypt." And how were the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh threatened if they did not go and help their brethren in their wars against the Canaanites, Deut. xxxii. 20, 21, 22, 23: "And Moses said unto them, if ye will do this thing, if ye will go armed before the Lord to war, and will go all of you armed over Jordan, before the Lord, until he hath driven out his enemies from before him, and the land be subdued before the Lord, then afterward ye shall return and be guiltless before the Lord, and before Israel, and this land shall be your possession before the Lord: but if ye will not do so, behold ye have sinned against the Lord, and be sure your sin will find you out."

That was a glorious work of God that he wrought for Israel, when he delivered them from the Canaanites, by the hand of Deborah and Barak: almost every thing about it showed a remarkable hand of God. It was a prophetess, one immediately inspired by God, that called the people to the battle, and con-

ducted them in the whole affair. The people seem to have been miraculously animated and encouraged in the matter, when they willingly offered themselves, and gathered together to the battle; they jeoparded their lives in the high places of the field, without being pressed or hired; when one would have thought they should have but little courage for such an undertaking; for what could a number of poor, weak, defenceless slaves do, without *a shield or spear to be seen among forty thousand of them*, to go against a great prince, with his mighty host, and nine hundred chariots of iron? And the success did wonderfully show the hand of God; which makes Deborah exultingly to say, Judg. v. 21, "O my soul, thou hast trodden down strength!" Christ with his heavenly host was engaged in that battle; and therefore it is said, ver. 20, "They fought from heaven, the stars in their courses fought against Sisera." The work of God therefore in this victory and deliverance that Christ and his host wrought for Israel, was a type of that victory and deliverance which he will accomplish for his church in that great battle, that last conflict that the church shall have with her open enemies, that shall introduce the church's latter day glory; as appears by Rev. xvi. 16 (speaking of that great battle): "And he gathered them together into a place, called in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon," i. e., the mountain of Megiddo; alluding, as is supposed by expositors, to the place where the battle was fought with the host of Sisera, Judg. v. 19: "The kings came and fought, the kings of Canaan, in Taanach by the waters of Megiddo." Which can signify nothing else, than that this battle, which Christ and his church shall have with their enemies, is the antitype of the battle that was fought there. But what a dreadful curse from Christ, did some of God's professing people Israel bring upon themselves, by lying still at that time, and not putting to a helping hand? Judg. v. 23: "Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof, because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty." The angel of the Lord was the captain of the host; he that had led Israel, and fought for them in that battle, who is very often called *the angel of the Lord* in Scripture; the same that appeared to Joshua with a sword drawn in his hand, and told him that *he was come as the captain of the host of the Lord;* and the same glorious captain that we have an account of, as leading forth his hosts to that battle, of which this was the type, Rev. xix. 11, &c. It seems the inhabitants of Meroz were unbelieving concerning this great work, nor would they hearken to Deborah's pretences, nor did it enter into them that such a poor defenceless company, should ever prevail against those that were so mighty; they did not acknowledge the hand of God, and therefore stood at a distance, and did nothing to promote the work: but what a bitter curse from God did they bring upon themselves by it!

It is very probable that one great reason why the inhabitants of Meroz were so unbelieving concerning this work, was that they argued *a priori;* they did not like the beginning of it, it being a woman that first led the way, and had the chief conduct in the affair; nor could they believe that such despicable instruments, as a company of unarmed slaves, were ever like to effect so great a thing; and pride and unbelief wrought together, in not being willing to follow Deborah to the battle.

It was another glorious work of God that he wrought for Israel, in the victory that was obtained by Gideon over the Midianites and Amalekites, and the children of the east, when they came up against Israel like grasshoppers, a multitude that could not be numbered. This also was a remarkable type of the victory of Christ and his church over his enemies, by the pouring out of the

Spirit with the preached gospel, as is evident by the manner of it, which Gideon was immediately directed to of God; which was not by human sword or bow, but only by blowing of trumpets, and by lights in earthen vessels. We read that on this occasion, Gideon called the people together to help in this great affair; and that accordingly, great numbers resorted to him, and came to the help of the Lord, Judg. vii. 23, 24. But there were some also at that time, that were unbelieving, and would not acknowledge the hand of God in that work, though it was so great and wonderful, nor would they join to promote it; and they were the inhabitants of Succoth and Penuel: Gideon desired their help, when he was pursuing after Zebah and Zalmunna; but they despised his pretences, and his confidence of the Lord's being on his side, to deliver those two great princes into the hands of such a despicable company, as he and his three hundred men, and would not own the work of God, nor afford Gideon any assistance: God proceeded in this work in a way that was exceeding cross to their pride. And they also refused to own the work, because they argued *a priori;* they could not believe that God would do such great things by such a despicable instrument; one of such a poor mean family in Manasseh, and be the least in his father's house; and the company that was with him appeared very wretched, being but three hundred men, and they weak and faint: but we see how they suffered for their folly, in not acknowledging, and appearing to promote this work of God. *Gideon*, when he returned from the victory, *took them, and taught them with the briers and thorns of the wilderness, and beat down the tower of Penuel* (he brought down their pride, and their false confidence), *and slew the men of the city*, Judg. chap. 8. This, in all probability Gideon did, as moved and directed by the angel of the Lord, that is Christ, that first called him, and sent him forth in this battle, and instructed and directed him, in the whole affair.

The return of the ark of God to dwell in Zion, in the midst of the land of Israel, after it had been long absent, first in the land of the Philistines, and then in Kirjathjearim, in the utmost borders of the land, did livelily represent the return of God to a professing people, in the spiritual tokens of his presence, after long absence from them; as well as the ark's ascending up into a mountain, typified Christ's ascension into heaven. It is evident by the Psalms that were penned on that occasion, especially the 68th Psalm, that the exceeding rejoicings of Israel on that occasion, represented the joy of the church of Christ, on his returning to it, after it has been in a low and dark state, to revive his work, bringing his people *back*, as it were *from Bashan, and from the depth of the sea*, scattering their spiritual enemies, and causing that *though they had lain among the pots, yet they should be as the wings of a dove, covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold;* and giving the blessed tokens of his presence in his house, that his people may *see the goings of God the king in his sanctuary;* and that the gifts which David, with such royal bounty, distributed amongst the people on that occasion (2 Sam. vi. 18, 19, and 1 Chron. xvi. 2, 3), represent spiritual blessings, that Christ liberally sends down on his church, by the outpourings of his Spirit. See Psal. lxviii. 1, 3, 13, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24. And we have an account how that all the people, from Shihor of Egypt, even unto the entering in of Hamath, gathered together, and appeared to join and assist in that great affair; and that all Israel *brought up the ark of the covenant of the Lord, with shouting, and with sound of the cornet, and with trumpets, and with cymbals, making a noise with psalteries and harps*, 1 Chron. xiii. 2, 5, and xv. 28. And not only the men, but the women of Israel, the

daughters of Zion, appeared as publicly joining in the praises and rejoicings that were on that occasion, 2 Sam. vi. 19. But we read of one of David's wives, even Michal, Saul's daughter, whose heart was not engaged in the affair, and did not appear with others to rejoice and praise God on this occasion, but kept away, and stood at a distance, as disaffected, and disliking the managements; she despised and ridiculed the transports, and extraordinary manifestations of joy that then were; and the curse that she brought upon herself by it, was that, of being barren to the day of her death. Let this be a warning to us: let us take heed, in this day of the bringing up of the ark of God, that while we are in visibility and profession the spouse of the spiritual David, we do not show ourselves to be indeed the children of false-hearted and rebellious Saul, by our standing aloof, and not joining in the joy and praises of the day, and disliking and despising the joys and affections of God's people, because they are to so high a degree, and so bring the curse of perpetual barrenness upon our souls.

Let us take heed that we be not like the son of the bond woman, that was born after the flesh, that persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, and mocked at the feasting and rejoicings that were made for Isaac when he was weaned; lest we should be cast out of the family of Abraham, as he was, Gen. xxi. 8, 9. That affair contained spiritual mysteries, and was typical of things that come to pass in these days of the gospel; as is evident by the apostle's testimony, Gal. iv. 23, to the end. And particularly it seems to have been typical of two things. 1. The weaning of the church from its milk of carnal ordinances, ceremonies, shadows, and beggarly elements, upon the coming of Christ, and the pouring out of the Spirit in the days of the apostles. The church of Christ, in the times of the Old Testament, was in its minority, and was a babe; and the apostle tells us that babes must be fed with milk, and not with strong meat; but when God weaned his church from these carnal ordinances, on the ceasing of the legal dispensation, a glorious gospel feast was provided for souls, and God fed his people with spiritual dainties, and filled them with the Spirit, and gave them joy in the Holy Ghost. Ishmael, in mocking at the time of Isaac's feast, by the apostle's testimony, represented the carnal Jews, the children of the literal Jerusalem, who, when they beheld the rejoicings of Christians, in their spiritual and evangelical privileges, were filled with envy, deriding, contradicting and blaspheming, Acts ii. 13, and chap. xiii. 45, and xviii. 6. And therefore were cast out of the family of Abraham, and out of the land of Canaan, to wander through the earth. 2. This weaning of Isaac seems also to represent the conversion of sinners, which is several times represented in Scripture by the weaning of a child; as in Psal. cxxxi., and Isa. xxviii. 9. Because in conversion, the soul is weaned from the enjoyments of the world, which are as it were the breast of our mother earth; and is also weaned from the covenant of our first parents, which we as naturally hang upon, as a child on its mother's breasts: and the great feast that Abraham made on that occasion, represents the spiritual feast, the heavenly privileges, and holy joys and comforts, which God gives souls at their conversion. Now is the time when God is in a remarkable manner bestowing the blessings of such a feast. Let every one take heed that he does not now show himself to be the son of the bond woman, and born after the flesh, by standing and deriding, with mocking Ishmael; lest they be cast out as he was, and it be said concerning them, these sons of the bond woman, shall not be heirs with the sons of the free woman. Do not let us stumble at the things that have been, because they are so great and extraordinary; for if we have run with the footmen, and they have wearied us, how shall we contend with horses? There

is doubtless a time coming when God will accomplish things vastly greater and more extraordinary than these.

And that we may be warned not to continue doubting and unbelieving, concerning this work, because of the extraordinary degree of it, and the suddenness and swiftness of the accomplishment of the great things that pertain to it, let us consider the example of the unbelieving lord in Samaria; who could not believe so extraordinary a work of God to be accomplished so suddenly as was declared to him: the prophet Elisha foretold that the great famine in Samaria should very suddenly, even in one day, be turned into an extraordinary plenty; but the work was too great, and too sudden for him to believe; says he, *If the Lord should make windows in heaven, might this thing be?* And the curse that he brought upon himself by it, was that he saw it with his eyes, and did not eat thereof, but miserably perished, and was trodden down as the mire of the streets, when others were feasting and rejoicing, 2 Kings, chap. 7.

When God redeemed his people from their Babylonish captivity, and they rebuilt Jerusalem, it was, as is universally owned, a remarkable type of the spiritual redemption of God's church; and particularly, was an eminent type of the great deliverance of the Christian church from spiritual Babylon, and their rebuilding the spiritual Jerusalem, in the latter days; and therefore they are often spoken of under one by the prophets: and this probably was the main reason that it was so ordered in Providence, and particularly noted in Scripture, that the children of Israel, on that occasion, kept the greatest *feast of tabernacles*, that ever had been kept in Israel, since the days of Joshua, when the people were first settled in Canaan (Neh. viii. 16, 17); because at that time happened that restoration of Israel, that had the greatest resemblance of that great restoration of the church of God, of which the *feast of tabernacles* was the type, of any that had been since Joshua first brought the people out of the wilderness, and settled them in the good land. But we read of some that opposed the Jews in that affair, and weakened their hands, and ridiculed God's people, and the instruments that were improved in that work, and despised their hope, and made as though their confidence was little more than a shadow, and would utterly fail them. *What do these feeble Jews?* say they: *Will they fortify themselves? Will they sacrifice? Will they make an end in a day? Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned? Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall.* Let not us be in any measure like them, lest it be said to us, as Nehemiah said to them, Neh. ii. 20, "We his servants will arise and build; but you have no portion, nor right, nor memorial in Jerusalem." And lest we bring Nehemiah's imprecation upon us, chap. iv. 5, "Cover not their iniquity, and let not their sin be blotted out from before thee; for they have provoked thee to anger, before the builders."

As persons will greatly expose themselves to the curse of God, by opposing or standing at a distance, and keeping silence at such a time as this; so for persons to arise, and readily to acknowledge God, and honor him in such a work, and cheerfully and vigorously to exert themselves to promote it, will be to put themselves much in the way of the divine blessing. What a mark of honor does God put upon those in Israel, that willingly offered themselves, and came to the help of the Lord against the mighty, when the angel of the Lord led forth his armies, and they fought from heaven against Sisera? Judg. v. 2, 9, 14, 15, 17, 18. And what a great blessing is pronounced on Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, for her appearing on the Lord's side, and for what she did to promote this work, ver. 24, which was no less than the curse pronounced in the preceding verse, against Meroz, for lying still: *Blessed above women shall Jael*

the wife of Heber the Kenite be, blessed shall she be above women in the tent. And what a blessing is pronounced on those which shall have any hand in the destruction of Babylon, which was the head city of the kingdom of Satan, and of the enemies of the church of God. Psal. cxxxvii. 9, "Happy shall he be, that taketh, and dasheth thy little ones against the stones." What a particular and honorable notice is taken, in the records of God's word, of those that arose, and appeared as David's helpers, to introduce him into the kingdom of Israel, in the xiith chapter of 1 Chron. The host of those that thus came to the help of the Lord, in that work of his, and glorious revolution in Israel, by which the kingdom of that great type of the Messiah was set up in Israel, is compared to the host of God, ver. 22: "At that time, day by day, there came to David, to help him, until it was a great host, like the host of God." And doubtless it was intended to be a type of that host of God, that shall appear with the spiritual David, as his helpers, when he shall come to set up his kingdom in the world; the same host that we read of, Rev. xix. 14. The Spirit of God then pronounced a special blessing on David's helpers, as those that were co-workers with God: ver. 18, "Then the Spirit came upon Amasai, who was chief of the captains, and he said, Thine are we, David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse; peace, peace be unto thee, and peace be to thine helpers, for thy God helpeth thee." So we may conclude that God will much more give his blessing to such as come to the help of the Lord, when he sets his own dear Son as king on his holy hill of Zion; and they shall be received by Christ, and he will put peculiar honor upon them, as David did on those his helpers; as we have an account, in the following words, ver. 18: "Then David received them, and made them captains of the band." It is particularly noted of those that came to David to Hebron, ready armed to the war, to turn the kingdom of Saul to him, according to the word of the Lord, that "they were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do," ver. 23 and 32. Herein they differed from the Pharisees and other Jews, that did not come to the help of the Lord, at the time that the great Son of David appeared to set up his kingdom in the world, whom Christ condemns, that they had not *understanding of those times*, Luke vii. 56, "Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky, and of the earth; but how is it, that ye do not discern these times?" So it always will be, when Christ remarkably appears on earth, on a design of setting up his kingdom here, there will be many that will not understand the times, nor what Israel ought to do, and so will not come to turn about the kingdom to David.

The favorable notice that God will take of such as appear to promote the work of God, at such a time as this, may also be argued from such a very particular notice being taken in the sacred records, of those that helped in rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem, upon the return from the Babylonish captivity, Nehem. chap iii.

At such a time as this, when God is setting his king on his holy hill of Zion, or establishing his dominion, or showing forth his regal glory from thence, he expects that his visible people, without exception, should openly appear to acknowledge him in such a work, and bow before him, and join with him. But especially does he expect this of civil rulers: God's eye is especially upon them, to see how they behave themselves on such an occasion. If a new king comes to the throne, when he comes from abroad, and enters into his kingdom, and makes his solemn entry into the royal city, it is expected that all sorts should acknowledge him; but above all others is it expected that the great men, and public officers of the nation should then make their appearance, and attend on their sovereign, with suitable congratulations, and manifestations of respect

and royalty: if such as these stand at a distance, at such a time, it will be much more taken notice of, and will awaken the prince's jealousy and displeasure much more, than such a behavior in the common people. And thus it is when the eternal Son of God, and heir of the world, by whom kings reign, and princes decree justice, whom his Father has appointed to be King of kings, comes as it were from far, and in the spiritual tokens of his presence, enters into the royal city Zion; God has his eye at such a time, especially upon those princes, nobles, and judges of the earth, spoken of Prov. viii. 16, to see how they behave themselves, whether they bow to him, that he has made the head of all principality and power. This is evident by the 2d Psalm, ver. 6, 7, 10, 11, 12: "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree; the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings, be instructed, ye judges of the earth; serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling; kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little." There seems to be in the words, an allusion to a new king's coming to the throne, and making his solemn entry into the royal city (as Zion was the royal city in Israel); when it is expected that all, especially men in public office and authority, should manifest their loyalty, by some open and visible token of respect, *by the way*, as he passes along; and those that refuse or neglect it are in danger of being immediately struck down, and perishing *from the way*, by which the king goes in solemn procession.

The day wherein God does in an eminent manner send forth the rod of Christ's strength out of Zion, that he may rule in the midst of his enemies, the day of his power, wherein his people shall be made willing, is also eminently a day of his wrath, especially to such rulers as oppose him, or will not bow to him; a day wherein he "shall strike through kings, and fill the places with the dead bodies, and wound the heads over many countries." Psal. 110. And thus it is, that when the Son of God *girds his sword upon his thigh, with his glory and his majesty, and in his majesty rides prosperously, because of truth, meekness and righteousness, his right hand teaches him terrible things.* It was the princes of Succoth especially, that suffered punishment, when the inhabitants of that city refused to come to the help of the Lord, when Gideon was pursuing after Zebah and Zalmunna; we read that Gideon took the elders of the city, and thorns of the wilderness, and briers, and with them he taught the men of Succoth. It is especially taken notice of that the rulers and chief men of Israel, were called upon to assist in the affair of bringing up the ark of God; they were chiefly consulted, and were principal in the management of the affair. 1 Chron. xiii. 1, "And David consulted with the captains of thousands and hundreds, and with every leader." And chap. xv. 25, "So David and the elders of Israel, and the captains over thousands, went to bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord, out of the house of Obed Edom, with joy." So 2 Sam. vi. 1. And so it was when the ark was brought into the temple, 1 Kings viii. 13, and 2 Chron. v. 2, 4.

And as rulers, by neglecting their duty at such a time, will especially expose themselves to God's great displeasure, so by fully acknowledging God in such a work, and by cheerfully and vigorously exerting themselves to promote it, they will especially be in the way of receiving peculiar honors and rewards at God's hands. It is noted of the princes of Israel, that they especially appeared to honor God with their princely offering, on occasion of the setting up the tabernacle of God, in the congregation of Israel (which I have observed already was done at the time of the feast of tabernacles, and was a type of the tab-

ernacle of God's being with men, and his dwelling with men in the latter days): and with what abundant particularity, is it noted of each prince, how much he offered to God on that occasion, for their everlasting honor, in the 7th chapter of Numbers. And so with how much favor and honor does the Spirit of God take notice of those princes in Israel, that came to the help of the Lord, in the war against Sisera, Judg. v. 9: "My heart is towards the governors of Israel, that offered themselves willingly among the people." And ver. 14, "Out of Machir came down governors." Ver. 55, "And the princes of Issachar were with Deborah." And in the account that we have of the rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem, in the third chapter of Nehemiah, it is particularly noted, what a hand one and another of the rulers had in this affair; we have an account that such a part of the wall was repaired by the ruler of the half part of Jerusalem, and such a part by the ruler of the other half part of Jerusalem, and such a part by the ruler of part of Bethhaccerem, and such a part by the ruler of part of Mizpah, and such a part by the ruler of the half part of Bethzur; and such a part by the ruler of Mizpah, ver. 9, 12, 14, 15, 16, 19. And there it is particularly noted of the rulers of one of the cities, that they put not their necks to the work of the Lord, though the common people did; and they are stigmatized for it, in the sacred records, to their everlasting reproach, ver. 5: "And next unto them, the Tekoites repaired; but their nobles put not their necks to the work of the Lord." So the Spirit of God with special honor, takes notice of princes and rulers of several tribes, that assisted in bringing up the ark, Psal. lxviii. 27.

And I humbly desire that it may be considered, whether we have not reason to fear that God is provoked with this land, that no more notice has been taken of this glorious work of the Lord, that has been lately carried on, by the civil authority; that there has no more been done by them, as a public acknowledgment of God in this work, and no more improvement of their authority to promote it, either by appointing a day of public thanksgiving to God, for so unspeakable a mercy, or a day of fasting and prayer, to humble ourselves before God, for our past deadness and unprofitableness under the means of grace, and to seek the continuance and increase of the tokens of his presence; or so much as to enter upon any public consultation, what should be done to advance the present revival of religion, and great reformation that is begun in the land. Is there not danger that such a behavior, at such a time, will be interpreted by God, as a denial of Christ? If but a new governor comes into a province, how much is there done, especially by those that are in authority, to put honor upon him, to arise and appear publicly, and go forth to meet him, to address and congratulate him, and with great expense to attend upon him and aid him? If the authority of the province, on such an occasion, should all sit still and say and do nothing, and take no notice of their new governor, would there not be danger of its being interpreted by him, and his prince that sent him, as a denial of his authority, or a refusing to receive him, and honor him as their governor? And shall the head of the angels, and Lord of the universe, come down from heaven, in so wonderful a manner, into the land, and shall all stand at a distance, and be silent and inactive on such an occasion? I would humbly recommend it to our rulers, to consider whether God does not now say to them, *Be wise now, ye rulers, be instructed ye judges of New England; kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way.*

It is prophesied, Zech. xii. 8, that in the glorious day of the Christian church, the house of David, or the rulers in God's Israel, *shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord, before his people.* But how can such rulers expect to have

any share in this glorious promise, that do not so much as openly acknowledge God in the work of that Spirit, by which the glory of that day is to be accomplished! The days are coming so often spoken of when the saints shall reign on earth, and all dominion and authority shall be given into their hands: but if our rulers would partake of this honor, they ought at such a day as this, to bring their glory and honor into the spiritual Jerusalem, agreeably to Rev. xxi. 24.

But above all others, is God's eye upon ministers of the gospel, as expecting of them, that they should arise, and acknowledge and honor him in such a work as this, and do their utmost to encourage and promote it: for to promote such a work, is the very business which they are called and devoted to; it is the office to which they are appointed as co-workers with Christ, and as his ambassadors and instruments, to awaken and convert sinners, and establish, build up, and comfort saints; it is the business they have been solemnly charged with, before God, angels and men, and that they have given up themselves to, by the most sacred vows. These especially, are the officers of Christ's kingdom, that above all other men upon earth, do represent his person, into whose hands Christ has committed the sacred oracles, and holy ordinances, and all his appointed means of grace, to be administered by them; they are the stewards of his household, into whose hands he has committed his provision; the immortal souls of men are committed to them, as a flock of sheep are committed to the care of a shepherd, or as a master commits a treasure to the care of a servant, of which he must give an account: it is expected of them, above all others, that they should have understanding of the times, and know what Israel ought to do; for it is their business to acquaint themselves with things pertaining to the kingdom of God, and to teach and enlighten others in things of this nature. We that are employed in the sacred work of the gospel ministry, are the watchmen over the city, to whom God has committed the keys of the gates of Zion; and if when the rightful king of Zion comes, to deliver his people from the enemy that oppresses them, we refuse to open the gates to him, how greatly shall we expose ourselves to his wrath! We are appointed to be the captains of the host in this war: and if a general will highly resent it in a private soldier, if he refuses to follow him when his banner is displayed, and his trumpet blown; how much more will he resent it in the officers of his army! The work of the gospel ministry consisting in the administration of God's word and ordinances, is the principal means that God has appointed for carrying on his work on the souls of men; and it is his revealed will, that whenever that glorious revival of religion, and reformation of the world, so often spoken of in his word, is accomplished, it should be principally by the labors of his ministers; and therefore how heinous will it be in the sight of God, if when a work of that nature is begun, we appear unbelieving, slow, backward, and disaffected? There was no sort of persons among the Jews that was in any measure treated with such manifestations of God's great displeasure, and severe indignation, for not acknowledging Christ, and the work of his Spirit, in the days of Christ and his apostles, as the ministers of religion: see how Christ deals with them for it, in the 23d chapter of Matthew. With what gentleness did Christ treat publicans and harlots, in comparison of them!

When the tabernacle was erected in the camp of Israel, and God came down from heaven to dwell in it, the priests were above all others concerned, and busily employed in the solemn transactions of that occasion, Levit. chap. viii and ix. And so it was at the time of the dedication of the temple of Solomon, 1 Kings chap. viii. and 2 Chron. chap. v. vi. and vii., which was at the time of the

feast of tabernacles, at the same time that the tabernacle was erected in the wilderness: and the Levites were primarily, and most immediately concerned in bringing up the ark into mount Zion; the business properly belonged to them, and the ark was carried upon their shoulders: 1 Chron. xv. 2, "Then David said, None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites; for them hath the Lord chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto him forever." And v. 11, 12, "And David called for Zadok and Abiathar the priests, and for the Levites, for Uriel, Asaiah, and Joel, Shemaiah, and Eliel, and Aminadab, and said unto them, Ye are the chief of the fathers of the Levites; sanctify yourselves, both ye, and your brethren, that you may bring up the ark of the Lord God of Israel, unto the place that I have prepared for it." So we have an account that the priests led the way in rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem, after the Babylonish captivity, Neh. iii. at the beginning.

If ministers preach never so good doctrine, and are never so painful and laborious in their work, yet, if at such a day as this, they show to their people, that they are not well affected to this work, but are very doubtful and suspicious of it, they will be very likely to do their people a great deal more hurt than good: for the very fame of such a great and extraordinary work of God, if their people were suffered to believe it to be his work, and the example of other towns, together with what preaching they might hear occasionally, would be likely to have a much greater influence upon the minds of their people to awaken them and animate them in religion, than all their labors with them: and besides their minister's opinion will not only beget in them a suspicion of the work they hear of abroad, whereby the mighty hand of God that appears in it, loses its influence upon their minds, but it will also tend to create a suspicion of every thing of the like nature, that shall appear among themselves, as being something of the same distemper that has become so epidemical in the land; and that is, in effect, to create a suspicion of all vital religion, and to put the people upon talking against it, and discouraging it, wherever it appears, and knocking it in the head, as fast as it rises. And we that are ministers, by looking on this work, from year to year, with a displeased countenance, shall effectually keep the sheep from their pasture, instead of doing the part of shepherds to them, by feeding them; and our people had a great deal better be without any settled minister at all, at such a day as this.

We that are in this sacred office have need to take heed what we do, and how we behave ourselves at this time: a less thing in a minister will hinder the work of God, than in others. If we are very silent, or say but little about the work, in our public prayers and preaching, or seem carefully to avoid speaking of it in our conversation, it will and justly may be interpreted by our people, that we who are their guides, to whom they are to have their eye for spiritual instruction, are suspicious of it; and this will tend to raise the same suspicions in them; and so the forementioned consequences will follow. And if we really hinder, and stand in the way of the work of God, whose business above all others it is to promote it, how can we expect to partake of the glorious benefits of it? And by keeping others from the benefit of it, we shall keep them out of heaven; therefore those awful words of Christ to the Jewish teachers, should be considered by us, Matt. xxiii. 13: "Wo unto you, for you shut up the kingdom of heaven; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering, to go in." If we keep the sheep from their pasture, how shall we answer it to the great shepherd, that has bought the flock with his precious blood, and has committed the care of them to us? I would humbly desire of every minister that has thus long remained disaffected to this work,

and has had contemptible thoughts of it, to consider whether he has not hitherto been like Michal, without any child, or at least in a great measure barren and unsuccessful in his work: I pray God it may not be a perpetual barrenness as hers was.

The times of Christ's remarkably appearing, in behalf of his church, and to revive religion, and advance his kingdom in the world, are often spoken of in the prophecies of Scripture, as times wherein he will remarkably execute judgments on such ministers or shepherds, as do not feed the flock, but hinder their being fed, and so deliver his flock from them, as Jer. xxiii. throughout, and Ezek. xxxiv. throughout, and Zech. x. 3, and Isa. lvi. 7, 8, 9, &c. I observed before that Christ's solemn, magnificent entry into Jerusalem, seems to be designed, as a representation of his glorious coming into his church, the spiritual Jerusalem; and therefore it is worthy to be noted, to our present purpose, that Christ at that time, cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves; signifying that when he should come to set up his kingdom on earth, he would cast out those out of his house, who, instead of being faithful ministers, officiated there only for worldly gain: not that I determine that all ministers that are suspicious of this work, do so; but I mention these things to show that it is to be expected, that a time of a glorious outpouring of the Spirit o God to revive religion, will be a time of remarkable judgments on those ministers that do not serve the end of their ministry.

The example of the unbelieving lord in Samaria, should especially be for the warning of ministers and rulers: at the time when God turned an extreme famine into a great plenty, by a wonderful work of his, the king appointed this lord to have the charge of the gate of the city; where he saw the common people, in multitudes, entering with great joy and gladness, loaded with provision, to feed and feast their almost famished bodies; but he himself, though he saw it with his eyes, never had one taste of it, but being weak with famine, sunk down in the crowd, and was trodden to death, as a punishment of God, for his not giving credit to that great and wonderful work of God, when sufficiently manifested to him to require his belief. Ministers are those, that the King of the church has appointed to have the charge of the gate, at which his people enter into the kingdom of heaven, there to be entertained and satisfied with an eternal feast; ministers have the charge of the house of God, which is the gate of heaven.

Ministers should especially take heed of a spirit of envy towards other ministers, that God is pleased to make more use of to carry on this work, than they; and that they do not, from such a spirit, reproach some preachers, that have the true spirit, as though they were influenced by a false spirit, or were bereft of reason, and were mad, and were proud, false pretenders, and deserved to be put in prison or the stocks, as disturbers of the peace; lest they expose themselves to the curse of Shemaiah, the Nehelamite, who envied the prophet Jeremiah, and in this manner reviled him, in his letter to Zephaniah the priest, Jer. xxix. 26, 27: "The Lord hath made thee priest, in the stead of Jehoiada the priest, that ye should be officers in the house of the Lord, for every man that is mad, and maketh himself a prophet, that thou shouldst put him in prison, and in the stocks. Now therefore, why hast thou not reproved Jeremiah of Anathoth, which maketh himself a prophet to you?" His curse is denounced in the 32d verse: "Therefore, thus saith the Lord, behold, I will punish Shemaiah the Nehelamite, and his seed; he shall not have a man to dwell among his people, neither shall he behold the good that I will do for my people, saith the Lord,

because he hath taught rebellion against the Lord." All those that are others' superiors or elders, should take heed, that at this day they be not like the elder brother, who could not bear it, that the prodigal should be made so much of, and should be so sumptuously entertained, and would not join in the joy of the feast; was, like Michal, Saul's daughter, offended at the music and dancing that he heard; the transports of joy displeased him; it seemed to him to be an unseemly and unseasonable noise and ado, that was made; and therefore stood at a distance, sullen, and much offended, and full of invectives against the young prodigal.

It is our wisest and best way, fully, and without reluctance, to bow to the great God in this work, and to be entirely resigned to him, with respect to the manner in which he carries it on, and the instruments he is pleased to make use of, and not to show ourselves out of humor, and sullenly to refuse to acknowledge the work, in the full glory of it, because we have not had so great a hand in promoting it, or have not shared so largely in the blessings of it, as some others; and not to refuse to give all that honor, that belongs to others, as instruments, because they are young, or are upon other accounts, much inferior to ourselves, and many others, and may appear to us very unworthy, that God should put so much honor upon them. When God comes to accomplish any great work for his church, and for the advancement of the kingdom of his Son, he always fulfils that scripture, Isa. ii. 17: "And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day." If God has a design of carrying on this work, every one, whether he be great or small, must either bow to it, or be broken before it: it may be expected that God's hand will be upon every thing that is high, and stiff, and strong in opposition, as in Isa. ii. 12, 13, 14, 15: "For the day of the Lord of hosts, shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up, and he shall be brought low; and upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan, and upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up, and upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall."

Not only magistrates and ministers, but every living soul, is now obliged to acknowledge God in this work, and put to his hand to promote it, as they would not expose themselves to God's curse. All sorts of persons, throughout the whole congregation of Israel, great and small, rich and poor, men and women, helped to build the tabernacle in the wilderness; some in one way, others in another; each one according to his own capacity: every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing; all sorts contributed, and all sorts were employed in that affair, in labors of their hands, both men and women: some brought gold and silver; others blue, purple and scarlet, and fine linen; others offered an offering of brass; others, with whom was found Shittim wood, brought it an offering to the Lord: the rulers brought onyx stones, and spice, and oil; and some brought goats' hair; and some rams' skins, and others badgers' skins. See Exod. xxxv. 20, &c. And we are told, verse 29, "The children of Israel brought a willing offering unto the Lord, every man and woman, whose heart made them willing." And thus it ought to be in this day of building the tabernacle of God; with such a willing and cheerful heart, ought every man, woman, and child, to do something to promote this work: those that have not onyx stones, or are not able to bring gold or silver, yet may bring goats' hair.

As all sorts of persons were employed in building the tabernacle in the wilderness, so the whole congregation of Israel were called together to set up the

tabernacle in Shiloh, after they came into Canaan, Josh. xviii. 1. And so again, the whole congregation of Israel were gathered together, to bring up the ark of God, from Kirjathjearim; and again, they were all assembled to bring it up, out of the house of *Obed Edom into mount Zion*; so again, all Israel met together to assist in the great affair of the dedication of the temple, and bringing the ark into it: so we have an account, how that all sorts assisted in the rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem, not only the proper inhabitants of Jerusalem, but those that dwelt in other parts of the land; not only the priests and rulers, but the Nethinims and merchants, husbandmen, and mechanics, and women, Neh. iii. 5, 12, 26, 31, 32. And we have an account of one and another, that he repaired over against his house, ver. 10, and 23, 28, and of one that repaired over against his chamber, ver. 30. So now, at this time of the rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, every one ought to promote the work of God within his own sphere, and by doing what belongs to him, in the place in which God has set him; men in a private capacity, may repair over against their houses: and even those that have not the government of families, and have but part of a house belonging to them, should repair, each one over against his chamber: and every one should be engaged to do the utmost that lies in his power, laboring with the utmost watchfulness, care and diligence, with united hearts, and united strength, and the greatest readiness to assist one another in this work: as God's people rebuilt the wall of Jerusalem; who were so diligent in the work, that they wrought from break of day, till the stars appeared, and did not so much as put off their clothes in the night; and wrought with that care and watchfulness, that with one hand they wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon; besides the guard they set to defend them; and were so well united in it, that they took care, that one should stand ready, with a trumpet in his hand, that if any were assaulted in one part, those in the other parts at the sound of the trumpet, might resort to them, and help them, Neh. iv. at the latter end.

Great care should be taken that the press should be improved to no purpose contrary to the interest of this work. We read that when God fought against Sisera, for the deliverance of his oppressed church, *they that handle the pen of the writer* came to the help of the Lord in that affair, Judg. v. 14. Whatever sort of men in Israel they were that were intended, yet as the words were indited by a Spirit, that had a perfect view of all events to the end of the world, and had a special eye in this song, to that great event of the deliverance of God's church, in the latter days, of which this deliverance of Israel was a type, it is not unlikely that they have respect to authors, those that should fight against the kingdom of Satan, with their pens. Those therefore that publish pamphlets, to the disadvantage of this work, and tending either directly or indirectly to bring it under suspicion, and to discourage or hinder it, would do well thoroughly to consider whether this be not indeed the work of God; and whether if it be, it is not likely that God will go forth as fire, to consume all that stands in his way, and so burn up those pamphlets; and whether there be not danger that the fire that is kindled in them, will scorch the authors.

When a people oppose Christ in the work of his Holy Spirit, it is because it touches them, in something that is dear to their carnal minds; and because they see the tendency of it is to cross their pride, and deprive them of the objects of their lusts. We should take heed that at this day we be not like the Gadarenes, who, when Christ came into their country, in the exercise of his glorious power and grace, triumphing over a legion of devils, and delivering a miserable creature, that had long been their captive, were all alarmed, because they lost their swine by it, and the whole multitude of the country came, and

besought him to depart out of their coasts: they loved their filthy swine better than Jesus Christ; and had rather have a legion of devils in their country, with their herd of swine, than Jesus Christ without them.

This work may be opposed, not only by directly speaking against the whole of it: persons may say that they believe there is a good work carried on in the country; and may sometimes bless God, in their public prayers, in general terms, for any awakenings or revivals of religion, there have lately been in any parts of the land; and may pray that God would carry on his own work, and pour out his Spirit more and more; and yet, as I apprehend, be in the sight of God, great opposers of his work: some will express themselves after this manner, that are so far from acknowledging and rejoicing in the infinite mercy, and glorious grace of God, in causing so happy a change in the land, that they look upon the religious state of the country, take it in the whole of it, much more sorrowful than it was ten years ago; and whose conversation, to those that are well acquainted with them, evidently shows, that they are more out of humor with the state of things, and enjoy themselves less, than they did before ever this work began.—If it be manifestly thus with us, and our talk and behavior with respect to this work, be such as has (though but) an indirect tendency, to beget ill thoughts and suspicions in others concerning it, we are opposers of the work of God.

Instead of coming to the help of the Lord, we shall actually fight against him, if we are abundant in insisting on, and setting forth the blemishes of the work, so as to manifest that we rather choose, and are more forward to take notice of what is amiss, than what is good and glorious in the work. Not but that the errors that are committed, ought to be observed and lamented, and a proper testimony borne against them, and the most probable means should be used to have them amended: but an insisting much upon them, as though it were a pleasing theme, or speaking of them with more appearance of heat of spirit, or with ridicule, or an air of contempt, than grief for them, has no tendency to correct the errors; but has a tendency to darken the glory of God's power and grace, appearing in the substance of the work, and to beget jealousies and ill thoughts in the minds of others, concerning the whole of it. Whatever errors many zealous persons have run into, yet if the work, in the substance of it, be the work of God, then it is a joyful day indeed; it is so in heaven, and ought to be so among God's people on earth, especially in that part of the earth, where this glorious work is carried on. It is a day of great rejoicing with Christ himself, the good shepherd, when he finds his sheep that was lost, lays it on his shoulders rejoicing, and calls together his friends and neighbors, saying, rejoice with me: if we therefore are Christ's friends, now it should be a day of great rejoicing with us. If we viewed things in a just light, so great an event as the conversion of such a multitude of sinners, would draw and engage our attention, much more than all the imprudences and irregularities that have been; our hearts would be swallowed up with the glory of this event, and we should have no great disposition to attend to any thing else. The imprudences and errors of poor feeble worms, do not hinder or prevent great rejoicing, in the presence of the angels of God, over so many poor sinners that have repented; and it will be an argument of something very ill in us, if they prevent our rejoicing.

Who loves in a day of great joy and gladness, to be much insisting on those things that are uncomfortable? Would it not be very improper, on a king's coronation day, to be much in taking notice of the blemishes of the royal family? Or would it be agreeable to the bridegroom on the day of his espousals,

the day of the gladness of his heart, to be much insisting on the blemishes of his bride? We have an account, how that at the time of that joyful dispensation of Providence, the restoration of the church of Israel, after the Babylonish captivity, and at the time of the feast of tabernacles, many wept at the faults that were found amongst the people, but were reproved for taking so much notice of the blemishes of that affair, as to overlook the cause of rejoicing. Neh. viii. 9, 10, 11, 12, "And Nehemiah, which is the Tirshatha, and Ezra the priest the scribe, and the Levites that taught the people, said unto all the people, this day is holy unto the Lord your God, mourn not nor weep; for all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law. Then he said unto them, go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them, for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy unto our Lord; neither be ye sorry, for the joy of the Lord is your strength. So the Levites stilled all the people, saying, hold your peace, for the day is holy, neither be ye grieved. And all the people went their way, to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them."

God doubtless now expects, that all sorts of persons in New England, rulers, ministers and people, high and low, rich and poor, old and young, should take great notice of his hand, in this mighty work of his grace, and should appear to acknowledge his glory in it, and greatly to rejoice in it, every one doing his utmost, in the place that God has set them in, to promote it. And God, according to his wonderful patience, seems to be still waiting, to give us opportunity, thus to acknowledge and honor him. But if we finally refuse, there is not the least reason to expect any other, than that his awful curse will pursue us, and that the pourings out of his wrath will be proportionable to the despised outpourings of his Spirit and grace.

PART III.

Showing, in many Instances, wherein the Subjects, or zealous Promoters of this Work, have been injuriously blamed.

This work, that has lately been carried on in the land, is the work of God, and not the work of man. Its beginning has not been of man's power or device, and its being carried on, depends not on our strength or wisdom; but yet God expects of all, that they should use their utmost endeavors to promote it, and that the hearts of all should be greatly engaged in this affair, and that we should improve our utmost strength in it, however vain human strength is without the power of God; and so he no less requires that we should improve our utmost care, wisdom and prudence, though human wisdom, of itself be as vain as human strength. Though God is wont to carry on such a work, in such a manner as, many ways, to show the weakness and vanity of means and human endeavors, in themselves; yet at the same time, he carries it on in such a manner, as to encourage diligence and vigilance, in the use of proper means and endeavors, and to punish the neglect of them. Therefore in our endeavors to promote this great work, we ought to use the utmost caution, vigilance and skill, in the measures we take in order to it. A great affair should be managed with great prudence: this is the most important affair that ever New England was called to be concerned in. When a people are engaged in war

with a powerful and crafty nation, it concerns them to manage an affair of such consequence with the utmost discretion. Of what vast importance then must it be, that we should be vigilant and prudent, in the management of this great war that New England now has, with so great a host of such subtle and cruel enemies, wherein we must either conquer or be conquered, and the consequence of the victory, on one side, will be our eternal destruction, in both soul and body in hell, and on the other side, our obtaining the kingdom of heaven, and reigning in it in eternal glory? We had need always to stand on our watch, and to be well versed in the art of war, and not to be ignorant of the devices of our enemies, and to take heed lest by any means we be beguiled through their subtilty.

Though the devil be strong, yet in such a war as this, he depends more on his craft than his strength: and the course he has chiefly taken, from time to time, to clog, hinder and overthrow revivals of religion in the church of God, has been by his subtle, deceitful management, to beguile and mislead those that have been engaged therein; and in such a course God has been pleased, in his holy and sovereign providence, to suffer him to succeed, oftentimes, in a great measure to overthrow that, which in its beginning appeared most hopeful and glorious. The work that is now begun in New England, is, as I have shown, eminently glorious, and if it should go on and prevail, would make New England a kind of heaven upon earth: is it not therefore a thousand pities, that it should be overthrown, through wrong and improper management, that we are led into by our subtle adversary in our endeavors to promote it?

In treating of the methods that ought to be taken to promote this work, I would,

1. Take notice, in some instances, wherein fault has been found with the conduct of those that have appeared to be the subjects of it, or have been zealous to promote it (as I apprehend) beyond just cause.

2. I would show what things ought to be corrected or avoided.

3. I would show positively, what ought to be done to promote this glorious work of God.

I. I would take notice of some things, at which offence has been taken without, or beyond just cause.

One thing that has been complained of, is ministers addressing themselves, rather to the affections of their hearers, than to their understandings, and striving to raise their passions to the utmost height, rather by a very affectionate manner of speaking, and a great appearance of earnestness, in voice and gesture, than by clear reasoning and informing their judgment: by which means it is objected, that the affections are moved, without a proportionable enlightening of the understanding.

To which I would say, I am far from thinking that it is not very profitable, for ministers in their preaching, to endeavor clearly and distinctly to explain the doctrines of religion, and unravel the difficulties that attend them, and to confirm them with strength of reason and argumentation, and also to observe some easy and clear method and order, in their discourses, for the help of the understanding and memory; and it is very probable that these things have been of late, too much neglected, by many ministers; yet, I believe that the objection that is made, of affections raised without enlightening the understanding, is in a great measure built on a mistake, and confused notions that some have about the nature and cause of the affections, and the manner in which they depend on the understanding. All affections are raised either by light *in the understanding*, or by some error and delusion *in the understanding*; for all affec-

tions do certainly arise from some apprehension in the understanding; and that apprehension must either be agreeable to truth, or else be some mistake or delusion; if it be an apprehension or notion that is agreeable to truth, then it is *light in the understanding*. Therefore the thing to be inquired into is, whether the apprehensions or notions of divine and eternal things, that are raised in people's minds, by these affectionate preachers, whence their affections are excited, be apprehensions that are agreeable to truth, or whether they are mistakes. If the former, then the affections are raised the way they should be, viz., by informing the mind, or conveying light to the understanding. They go away with a wrong notion, that think that those preachers cannot affect their hearers, by enlightening their understandings, that do not do it by such a distinct, and learned handling of the doctrinal points of religion, as depends on human discipline, or the strength of natural reason, and tends to enlarge their hearers' learning, and speculative knowledge in divinity. The manner of preaching without this, may be such as shall tend very much to set divine and eternal things in a right view, and to give the hearers such ideas and apprehensions of them as are agreeable to truth, and such impressions on their hearts, as are answerable to the real nature of things: and not only the words that are spoken, but the manner of speaking, is one thing that has a great tendency to this. I think an exceeding affectionate way of preaching about the great things of religion, has in itself no tendency to beget false apprehensions of them; but on the contrary a much greater tendency to beget true apprehensions of them, than a moderate, dull, indifferent way of speaking of them. An appearance of affection and earnestness, in the manner of delivery, if it be very great indeed, yet if it be agreeable to the nature of the subject, and be not beyond a proportion to its importance, and worthiness of affection, and there be no appearance of its being feigned or forced, has so much the greater tendency to beget true ideas or apprehensions in the minds of the hearers, of the subject spoken of, and so to enlighten the understanding; and that for this reason, that such a way or manner of speaking of these things, does in fact, more truly represent them, than a more cold and indifferent way of speaking of them. If the subject be in its own nature, worthy of very great affection, then a speaking of it with very great affection, is most agreeable to the nature of that subject, or is the truest representation of it, and therefore has most of a tendency to beget true ideas of it, in the minds of those, to whom the representation is made. And I do not think ministers are to be blamed, for raising the affections of their hearers too high, if that which they are affected with, be only that which is worthy of affection, and their affections are not raised beyond a proportion to their importance, or worthiness of affection. I should think myself in the way of my duty, to raise the affections of my hearers as high as I possibly can, provided that they are affected with nothing but truth, and with affections that are not disagreeable to the nature of what they are affected with. I know it has long been fashionable to despise a very earnest and pathetical way of preaching: and they, and they only have been valued as preachers, that have shown the greatest extent of learning, and strength of reason, and correctness of method and language: but I humbly conceive it has been for want of understanding, or duly considering human nature, that such preaching has been thought to have the greatest tendency to answer the ends of preaching: and the experience of the present and past ages abundantly confirms the same. Though, as I said before, clearness of distinction and illustration, and strength of reason, and a good method, in the doctrinal handling of the truths of religion, is many ways needful and profitable, and not to be neglected, yet an increase in specu-

lative knowledge in divinity, is not what is so much needed by our people, as something else. Men may abound in this sort of light and have no heat. How much has there been of this sort of knowledge in the Christian world, in this age! Was there ever an age wherein strength and penetration of reason, extent of learning, exactness of distinction, correctness of style, and clearness of expression, did so abound? And yet was there ever an age, wherein there has been so little sense of the evil of sin, so little love to God, heavenly mindedness, and holiness of life, among the professors of the true religion? Our people do not so much need to have their heads stored, as to have their hearts touched; and they stand in the greatest need of that sort of preaching, that has the greatest tendency to do this.

Those texts, Isa. lviii. 1, "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins." And Ezek. vi. 11, "Thus saith the Lord God, smite with thine hand, and stamp with thy foot, and say, alas, for all the evil abominations of the house of Israel!" I say these texts (however the use that some have made of them has been laughed at) will fully justify a great degree of *pathos*, and manifestation of zeal and fervency in preaching the word of God: they may indeed be abused, to justify that which would be odd and unnatural, amongst us, not making due allowance for difference of manners and customs, in different ages and nations; but let us interpret them how we will, they at least imply, that a most affectionate and earnest manner of delivery, in many cases, becomes a preacher of God's word.

Preaching of the word of God, is commonly spoken of in Scripture, in such expressions, as seem to import a loud and earnest speaking; as in Isa. xl. 2, "Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her iniquity is pardoned." And ver. 3, "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord." Ver. 6, "The voice said cry: and he said, what shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof, as the flower of the field." Jer. ii. 2, "Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, thus saith the Lord," &c. Jonah i. 2, "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it." Isa. lxi. 1, 2, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me, to preach good tidings to the meek, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the year of vengeance of our God." Isa. lxii. 11, "Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, say ye to the daughter of Zion, behold thy salvation cometh," &c. Rom. x. 18, "Their sound went into all the earth, and their words to the end of the world." Jer. xi. 6, "Proclaim all these words in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, saying, hear ye the words of this covenant, and do them." So chap. xix. 2, and vii. 2. Prov. viii. 1, "Doth not wisdom cry, and understanding put forth her voice?" Ver. 3, 4, "She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors; unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men!" And chap. i. 20, "Wisdom crieth without, she uttereth her voice in the streets." Chap. ix. 3, "She hath sent forth her maidens, she crieth upon the high places of the city." John vii. 37, "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, if any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink."

It seems to be foretold, that the gospel should be especially preached in a loud and earnest manner, at the introduction of the prosperous state of religion, in the latter days. Isa. xl. 9, "O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up nto the high mountain! O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy

voice with strength! Lift up, and be not afraid! Say unto the cities of Judah, behold your God!" Isa. lii. 7, 8, "How beautiful upon the mountains, are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings! Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice." Isa. xxvii. 13, "And it shall come to pass, in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish." And this will be one way, that the church of God will cry at that time, like a travailing woman, when Christ mystical is going to be brought forth; as Rev. xii. at the beginning. It will be by ministers, that are her mouth: and it will be this way, that Christ will then cry like a travailing woman, as in Isa. xlii. 14, "I have long time holden my peace: I have been still, and refrained myself; now will I cry like a travailing woman." Christ cries by his ministers, and the church cries by her officers. And it is worthy to be noted, that the word commonly used in the New Testament, that we translate *preach*, properly signifies to *proclaim aloud like a crier*.

Another thing that some ministers have been greatly blamed for, and I think unjustly, is speaking terror to them, that are already under great terrors, instead of comforting them.—Indeed, if ministers in such a case, go about to terrify persons with that which is not true, or to affright them by representing their case worse than it is, or in any respect otherwise than it is, they are to be condemned; but if they terrify them only by still holding forth more light to them, and giving them to understand more of the truth of their case, they are altogether to be justified. When sinners' consciences are greatly awakened by the Spirit of God, it is by light imparted to the conscience, enabling them to see their case to be, in some measure, as it is; and if more light be let in, it will terrify them still more: but ministers are not therefore to be blamed that they endeavor to hold forth more light to the conscience, and do not rather alleviate the pain they are under, by intercepting and obstructing that light that shines already. To say any thing to those who have never believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, to represent their case any otherwise than exceeding terrible, is not to preach the word of God to them; for the word of God reveals nothing but truth, but this is to delude them. Why should we be afraid to let persons, that are in an infinitely miserable condition, know the truth or bring them into the light, for fear it should terrify them? It is light that must convert them, if ever they are converted. The more we bring sinners into the light, while they are miserable, and the light is terrible to them, the more likely it is, that by and by, the light will be joyful to them. The ease, peace and comfort, that natural men enjoy, have their foundation in darkness and blindness; therefore as that darkness vanishes, and light comes in, their peace vanishes, and they are terrified: but that is no good argument, why we should endeavor to hold their darkness, that we may uphold their comfort. The truth is, that as long as men reject Christ, and do not savingly believe in him, however they may be awakened, and however strict and conscientious, and laborious they may be in religion, they have the wrath of God abiding on them, they are his enemies, and the children of the devil (as the Scripture calls all that be not savingly converted, Matt. xiii. 38, 1 John iii. 10); and it is uncertain whether they shall ever obtain mercy: God is under no obligation to show them mercy, nor will he be, if they fast and pray and cry never so much; and they are then especially provoking God, under those terrors, that they stand it out against Christ, and will not accept of an offered Saviour, though they see so much need of him: and seeing this is the truth, they should be told so, that they may be sensible what their case indeed is.

To blame a minister, for thus declaring the truth to those who are under

awakenings, and not immediately administering comfort to them, is like blaming a surgeon, because when he has begun to thrust in his lance, whereby he has already put his patient to great pain, and he shrieks and cries out with anguish, he is so cruel that he will not stay his hand, but goes on, to thrust it in further, until he comes to the core of the wound. Such a compassionate physician, who as soon as his patient began to flinch, should withdraw his hand, and go about immediately to apply a plaster, to skin over the wound, and leave the core untouched, would be one that would heal the hurt slightly, crying peace, peace, when there is no peace.

Indeed something else besides terror, is to be preached to them, whose consciences are awakened. The gospel is to be preached to them: they are to be told that there is a Saviour provided, that is excellent and glorious, who has shed his precious blood for sinners, and is every way sufficient to save them, that stands ready to receive them, if they will heartily embrace him; for this is also the truth, as well as that they now are in an infinitely dreadful condition: this is the word of God. Sinners at the same time that they are told how miserable their case is, should be earnestly invited to come and accept of a Saviour, and yield their hearts unto him, with all the winning, encouraging arguments, for them so to do, that the gospel affords: but this is to induce them to escape from the misery of the condition that they are now in: but not to make them think their present condition less miserable than it is, or at all to abate their uneasiness and distress, while they are in it; that would be the way to quiet them, and fasten them in it, and not to excite them to fly from it.—Comfort, in one sense, is to be held forth to sinners, under awakenings of conscience, i. e., comfort is to be offered to them in Christ, on condition of their flying *from their present miserable state*, to him: but comfort is not to be administered to them, *in their present state*, as any thing that they have now any title to, while out of Christ. No comfort is to be administered to them, from any thing in *them*, any of their qualifications, prayers or other performances, past, present or future; but ministers should, in such cases, strive to their utmost to take all such comforts from them, though it greatly increases their terror. A person that sees himself ready to sink into hell, is ready to strive, some way or other, to lay God under some obligation to him; but he is to be beat off from every thing of that nature, though it greatly increases his terror, to see himself wholly destitute, on every side, of any refuge, or any thing of his own to lay hold of; as a man that sees himself in danger of drowning, is in terror, and endeavors to catch hold on every twig within his reach, and he that pulls away those twigs from him, increases his terror; yet if they are insufficient to save him, and by being in his way, prevent his looking to that which will save him, to pull them away, is necessary to save his life.

If sinners are in any distress, from any error that they embrace, or mistake they are under, that is to be removed: for instance, if they are in terror, from an apprehension that they have committed the unpardonable sin, or that those things have happened to them that are certain signs of reprobation, or any other delusion, such terrors have no tendency to do them any good; for these terrors are from temptation, and not from conviction: but that terror which arises from conviction or a sight of truth, is to be increased; for those that are most awakened, have great remaining stupidity, they have a sense of but little of that which is; and it is from remaining blindness and darkness, that they see no more: and that remaining blindness is a disease, that we ought to endeavor to remove. I am not afraid to tell sinners, that are most sensible of their misery, that their case is indeed as miserable as they think it to be, and a thousand times

more so; for this is the truth. Some may be ready to say, that though it be the truth, yet the truth is not to be spoken at all times, and seems not to be seasonable then: but it seems to me, such truth is never more seasonable than at such a time, when Christ is beginning to open the eyes of conscience. Ministers ought to act as co-workers with him; to take that opportunity, and to the utmost to improve that advantage, and strike while the iron is hot, and when the light has begun to shine, then to remove all obstacles, and use all proper means, that it may come in more fully, and the work be done thoroughly then. And experience abundantly shows, that to take this course, is not of a hurtful tendency, but very much the contrary: I have seen, in very many instances, the happy effects of it, and oftentimes a very speedy happy issue, and never knew any ill consequence, in case of real conviction, and when distress has been only from thence.

I know of but one case, wherein the truth ought to be withheld from sinners in distress of conscience, and that is the case of melancholy: and it is not to be withheld from them then, because the truth tends to do them hurt, but because if we speak the truth to them, sometimes they will be deceived and led into error by it, through that strange disposition there is in them to take things wrong. So that that which as it is spoken, is truth, as it is heard and received, and applied by them, is falsehood; as it will be unless the truth be spoken with abundance of caution and prudence, and consideration of their disposition and circumstances. But the most awful truths of God's word, ought not to be withheld from public congregations, because it may happen that some such melancholic persons may be in it; any more than the Bible is to be withheld from the Christian world, because it is manifest that there are a great many melancholic persons in Christendom, that exceedingly abuse the awful things contained in the Scripture, to their own wounding. Nor do I think that to be of weight, which is made use of by some, as a great and dreadful objection against the terrifying preaching that has of late been in New England, viz., that there have been some instances of melancholic persons that have so abused it, that the issue has been the murder of themselves. The objection from hence is no stronger against awakening preaching, than it is against the Bible itself: there are hundreds, and probably thousands of instances might be produced, of persons that have murdered themselves, under religious melancholy: these murders, probably never would have been, if it had not been for the Bible, or if the world had remained in a state of heathenish darkness. The Bible has not only been the occasion of these sad effects, but of thousands, and I suppose millions, of other cruel murders, that have been committed, in the persecutions that have been raised, that never would have been, if it had not been for the Bible: many whole countries have been, as it were, deluged with innocent blood, which would not have been, if the gospel never had been preached in the world. It is not a good objection against any kind of preaching, that some men abuse it greatly to their hurt. It has been acknowledged by all divines, as a thing common in all ages, and all Christian countries, that a very great part of those that sit under the gospel, do so abuse it, that it only proves an occasion of their far more aggravated damnation, and so of men's eternally murdering their souls; which is an effect infinitely more terrible than the murder of their bodies. It is as unjust to lay the blame of these self murders to those ministers who have declared the awful truths of God's word, in the most lively and affecting manner they were capable of, as it would be to lay the blame of hardening men's hearts, and blinding their eyes, and their more dreadful eternal damnation, to the prophet Isaiah, or Jesus Christ, because this was the consequence of their preaching, with respect to many of their hearers. Isa. vi. 10, John ix. 39, Matth. xiii. 14. Though

a very few have abused the awakening preaching that has lately been, to so sad an effect as to be the cause of their own temporal death; yet it may be to one such instance, there have been hundreds, yea thousands, that have been saved, by this means, from eternal death.

What has more especially given offence to many, and raised a loud cry against some preachers, as though their conduct were intolerable, is their frighting poor innocent children, with talk of hell fire, and eternal damnation. But if those that complain so loudly of this, really believe, what is the general profession of the country, viz., that all are by nature the children of wrath, and heirs of hell; and that every one that has not been born again, whether he be young or old, is exposed, every moment, to eternal destruction, under the wrath of Almighty God; I say, if they really believe this, then such a complaint and cry as this, bewrays a great deal of weakness and inconsideration. As innocent as children seem to be to us, yet, if they are out of Christ, they are not so in God's sight, but are young vipers, and are infinitely more hateful than vipers, and are in a most miserable condition, as well as grown persons; and they are naturally very senseless and stupid, being *born as the wild ass's colt*, and need much to awaken them. Why should we conceal the truth from them? Will those children that have been dealt tenderly with, in this respect, and lived and died insensible of their misery, until they come to feel it in hell, ever thank parents, and others, for their tenderness, in not letting them know what they were in danger of? If parents' love towards their children was not blind, it would affect them much more to see their children every day exposed to eternal burnings, and yet senseless, than to see them suffer the distress of that awakening, that is necessary in order to their escape from them, and that tends to their being eternally happy, as the children of God. A child that has a dangerous wound, may need the painful lance, as well as grown persons; and that would be a foolish pity, in such a case, that should hold back the lance, and throw away the life. I have seen the happy effects of dealing plainly, and thoroughly with children, in the concerns of their souls, without sparing them at all, in many instances; and never knew any ill consequences of it in any one instance.

Another thing, that a great deal has been said against, is having so frequent religious meetings, and spending so much time in religion. And indeed, there are none of the externals of religion, but what are capable of excess: and I believe it is true, that there has not been a due proportion observed in religion of late. We have placed religion too much in external duties of the first table; we have abounded in religious meetings, and in praying, reading, hearing, singing, and religious conference; and there has not been a proportionable increase of zeal for deeds of charity, and other duties of the second table; though it must be acknowledged that they are also much increased. But yet it appears to me, that this objection of persons spending too much time in religion, has been in the general groundless. Though worldly business must be done, and persons ought not to neglect the business of their particular callings, yet it is to the honor of God, that a people should be so much in outward acts of religion, as to carry in it, a visible, public appearance, of a great engagedness of mind in it, as the main business of life: and especially is it fit, that at such an extraordinary time, when God appears unusually present with a people, in wonderful works of power and mercy, that they should spend more time than usual in religious exercises, to put honor upon that God that is then extraordinarily present, and to seek his face; as it was with the Christian church in Jerusalem, on occasion of that extraordinary pouring out of the Spirit, soon after Christ's ascension, Acts ii. 46: "And they continued daily with one accord, in the temple,

and breaking bread, from house to house." And so it was at Ephesus, at a time of great outpouring of the Spirit there; the Christians there attended public religious exercises, every day, for two years together, Acts xix. 8, 9, 10: "And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God: but when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way, before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus; and this continued, by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia, heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks." And as to the grand objection, of *six days shalt thou labor*, all that can be understood by it, and all that the very objectors themselves understand by it, is that we *may* follow our secular labors in those six days, that are not the Sabbath, and *ought* to be diligent in them: not but that sometimes, we may turn from them, even within those six days, to keep a day of fasting, or thanksgiving, or to attend a lecture; and that more frequently or rarely, as God's providence and the state of things shall call us, according to the best judgment of our discretion.

Though secular business, as I said before, ought not to be neglected, yet I cannot see how it can be maintained, that religion ought not to be attended, so as in the least to injure our temporal affairs, on any other principles than those of infidelity. None objects against injuring one temporal affair for the sake of another temporal affair of much greater importance; and therefore, if eternal things are as real as temporal things, and are indeed of infinitely greater importance; then why may we not voluntarily suffer, in some measure, in our temporal concerns, while we are seeking eternal riches, and immortal glory? It is looked upon no way improper for a whole nation, to spend considerable time, and much of their outward substance, on some extraordinary temporal occasions, for the sake only of the ceremonies of a public rejoicing; and it would be thought dishonorable to be very exact, about what we spend, or careful lest we injure our estates, on such an occasion: and why should we be exact only with Almighty God, so that it should be a crime to be otherwise than scrupulously careful, lest we injure ourselves in our temporal interests, or put honor upon him, and seek our own eternal happiness? We should take heed that none of us be in any wise like Judas, who greatly complained of needless expense, and waste of outward substance, to put honor upon Christ, when Mary broke her box, and poured the precious ointment on his head: he had indignation within himself on that account, and cries out, *Why was this waste of the ointment made? For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor.* Mark xiv. 3, 4, 5, &c., and John xii. 4, 5, &c.

And besides, if the matter be justly considered and examined, I believe it will be found, that the country has lost no time from their temporal affairs, by the late revival of religion, but have rather gained time; and that more time has been saved from frolicking and tavern haunting, idleness, unprofitable visits, vain talk, fruitless pastimes, and needless diversions, than has lately been spent in extraordinary religion; and probably five times as much has been saved in persons' estates, at the tavern, and in their apparel, as has been spent by religious meetings.

The great complaint that is made against so much time spent in religion, cannot be in general from a real concern that God may be honored, and his will done, and the best good of men promoted; as is very manifest from this, that now there is a much more earnest and zealous outcry made in the country, against

this extraordinary religion, than was before, against so much time spent in tavern haunting, vain company keeping, night walking, and other things, which wasted both our time and substance, and injured our moral virtue.

The frequent preaching that has lately been, has in a particular manner been objected against as unprofitable and prejudicial. It is objected that when sermons are heard so very often, one sermon tends to thrust out another; so that persons lose the benefit of all: they say two or three sermons in a week is as much as they can remember and digest. Such objections against frequent preaching, if they are not from an enmity against religion, are for want of duly considering the way that sermons usually profit an auditory. The main benefit that is obtained by preaching, is by impression made upon the mind in the time of it, and not by any effect that arises afterwards by a remembrance of what was delivered. And though an after remembrance of what was heard in a sermon is oftentimes very profitable; yet, for the most part, that remembrance is from an impression the words made on the heart in the time of it; and the memory profits, as it renews and increases that impression; and a frequent inculcating the more important things of religion in preaching, has no tendency to rase out such impressions, but to increase them, and fix them deeper and deeper in the mind, as is found by experience. It never used to be objected against, that persons, upon the Sabbath, after they have heard two sermons that day, should go home and spend the remaining part of the Sabbath in reading the Scriptures, and printed sermons; which, in proportion as it has a tendency to affect the mind at all, has as much of a tendency to drive out what they have heard, as if they heard another sermon preached. It seems to have been the practice of the apostles to preach every day in places where they went; yea, though sometimes they continued long in one place, Acts ii. 42, and 46, Acts xix. 8, 9, 10. They did not avoid preaching one day, for fear they should thrust out of the minds of their hearers what they had delivered the day before; nor did Christians avoid going every day to hear, for fear of any such bad effect, as is evident by Acts ii. 42, 46.

There are some things in Scripture that seem to signify as much, as that there should be preaching in an extraordinary frequency, at the time when God should be about to introduce that flourishing state of religion that should be in the latter days; as that in Isa. lxii. at the beginning: "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, for Jerusalem's sake, I will not rest; until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof, as a lamp that burneth: and the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory." And ver. 5, 6, "For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee; and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee. I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace, day nor night." The destruction of the city of Jericho, is evidently, in all its circumstances, intended by God, as a great type of the overthrow of Satan's kingdom; the priests blowing with trumpets at that time, represents ministers preaching the gospel; the people compassed the city seven days, the priests blowing the trumpets; but when the day was come that the walls of the city were to fall, the priests were more frequent and abundant in blowing their trumpets; there was as much done in one day then, as had been done in seven days before; they compassed the city seven times that day, blowing their trumpets, until at length it come to one long and perpetual blast, and then the walls of the city fell down flat. The extraordinary preaching that shall be at the beginning of that glorious jubilee of the church, is represented by the extraordinary sounding of trumpets, throughout the land of Canaan, at

the beginning of the year of jubilee; and by the reading of the law, before all Israel, in the year of release, at the feast of tabernacles. And the crowing of the cock, at break of day, which brought Peter to repentance, seems to me to be intended to signify, the awakening of God's church out of their lethargy, wherein they had denied their Lord, by the extraordinary preaching of the gospel, that shall be at the dawning of the day of the church's light and glory. And there seems at this day to be an uncommon hand of divine Providence, in animating, enabling, and upholding some ministers in such abundant labors.

Another thing, wherein I think some ministers have been injured, is in being very much blamed for making so much of outcries, faintings, and other bodily effects; speaking of them as tokens of the presence of God, and arguments of the success of preaching; seeming to strive to their utmost to bring a congregation to that pass, and seeming to rejoice in it, yea, even blessing God for it, when they see these effects.

Concerning this I would observe, in the *first* place, that there are many things, with respect to cryings out, falling down, &c., that are charged on ministers, that they are not guilty of. Some would have it, that they speak of these things as certain evidences of a work of the Spirit of God on the hearts of their hearers, or that they esteem these bodily effects themselves to be the work of God, as though the Spirit of God took hold of, and agitated the bodies of men; and some are charged with making these things essential, and supposing that persons cannot be converted without them; whereas I never yet could see the person that held either of these things.

But for speaking of such effects as probable tokens of God's presence, and arguments of the success of preaching, it seems to me they are not to be blamed; because I think they are so indeed: and therefore when I see them excited by preaching the important truths of God's word, urged and enforced by proper arguments and motives, or are consequent on other means that are good, I do not scruple to speak of them, and to rejoice in them, and bless God for them as such; and that for this (as I think) good reason, viz., that from time to time, upon proper inquiry and examination, and observation of the consequence and fruits, I have found that these are all evidences that persons in whom these effects appear, are under the influences of God's Spirit, in such cases. Cryings out, in such a manner, and with such circumstances, as I have seen them from time to time, is as much an evidence to me, of the general cause it proceeds from, as language: I have learned the meaning of it, the same way that persons learn the meaning of language, viz., by use and experience. I confess that when I see a great crying out in a congregation, in the manner that I have seen it, when those things are held forth to them that are worthy of their being greatly affected by, I rejoice in it, much more than merely in an appearance of solemn attention, and a show of affection by weeping; and that because when there have been those outcries, I have found from time to time, a much greater and more excellent effect. To rejoice that the work of God is carried on calmly, without much ado, is in effect to rejoice that it is carried on with less power, or that there is not so much of the influence of God's Spirit: for though the degree of the influence of the Spirit of God, on *particular persons*, is by no means to be judged of by the degree of external appearances, because of the different constitution, tempers, and circumstances of men; yet if there be a very powerful influence of the Spirit of God on a mixed multitude, it will cause some way or other, a great visible commotion.

And as to ministers aiming at such effects, and striving by all means to bring a congregation to that pass, that there should be such an uproar among

them; I suppose none aim at it any otherwise, than as they strive to raise the affections of their hearers to such a height, as very often appears in these effects; and if it be so, that those affections are commonly good, and it be found by experience that such a degree of them commonly has a good effect, I think they are to be justified in so doing.

Again, some ministers have been blamed for keeping persons together, that have been under great affections, which have appeared in such extraordinary outward manifestations. Many think this promotes confusion, that persons in such circumstances do but discompose each other's minds, and disturb the minds of others; and that therefore it is best they should be dispersed, and that when any in a congregation are strongly seized, so that they cannot forbear outward manifestations of it, they should be removed that others' minds may not be diverted.

But I cannot but think that those that thus object go upon quite wrong notions of things: for though persons ought to take heed that they do not make an ado without necessity; for this will be the way in time, to have such appearances lose all their effect; yet the unavoidable manifestations of strong religious affections tend to a happy influence on the minds of bystanders, and are found by experience to have an excellent and durable effect; and so to contrive and order things, that others may have opportunity and advantage to observe them, has been found to be blessed, as a great means to promote the work of God; and to prevent their being in the way of observation, is to prevent the effect of that, which God makes use of, as a principal means of carrying on his work, at such an extraordinary time, viz., example; which is often spoken of in Scripture, as one of the chief means by which God would carry on his work, in the time of the prosperity of religion in the latter days: I have mentioned some texts already to this purpose, in what I published before, of *the marks of a work of the true Spirit;* but would here mention some others. In Zech. ix. 15, 16, those that in the latter days should be filled, in an extraordinary manner, with the Holy Spirit, so as to appear in outward manifestations, and making a noise, are spoken of as those that God, in these uncommon circumstances, will set up to the view of others, as a prize or ensign, by their example and the excellency of their attainments, to animate and draw others, as men gather about an ensign, and run for a prize, a crown and precious jewels, set up in their view. The words are: *And they shall drink, and make a noise, as through wine; and they shall be filled like bowls, and as the corners of the altar: and the Lord their God shall save them, in that day, as the flock of his people; for they shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon his land.* (But I shall have occasion to say something more of this Scripture afterwards.) Those that make the objection I am upon, instead of suffering this prize or ensign to be in public view, are for having it removed, and hid in some corner. To the like purpose is that, Isa. lxii. 3, "Thou shalt be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God." Here it is observable, that it is not said, thou shalt be a crown *upon the head*, but *in the hand* of the Lord; i. e., held forth, in thy beauty and excellency, as a prize, to be bestowed upon others that shall behold thee, and be animated by the brightness and lustre which God shall endow thee with. The great influence of the example of God's people, in their bright and excellent attainments, to propagate religion, in those days, is further signified, in Isa. lx. 3, "And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." With ver. 22, "A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation." And Zech. x. 8, 9, "And they shall increase as they have increased; and I will sow them among

the people." And Hos. ii. 23, "And I will sow her unto me in the earth." So Jer. xxxi. 27.

Another thing that gives great disgust to many, is the disposition that persons show, under great affections, to speak so much, and with such earnestness and vehemence, to be setting forth the greatness and wonderfulness and importance of divine and eternal things; and to be so passionately warning, inviting and entreating others.

Concerning which I would say, that I am far from thinking that such a disposition should be wholly without any limits or regulation (as I shall more particularly show afterwards); and I believe some have erred, in setting no bounds, and indulging and encouraging this disposition without any kind of restraint or direction: but yet, it seems to me, that such a disposition in general, is what both reason and Scripture will justify. Those that are offended at such things, as though they were unreasonable, are not just: upon examination it will probably be found, that they have one rule of reasoning about temporal things, and another about spiritual things.—They would not at all wonder, if a person on some very great and affecting occasion, of extraordinary danger or great joy, that eminently and immediately concerns him and others, is disposed to speak much, and with great earnestness, especially to those to whom he is united, in the bonds of dear affection, and great concern for their good. And therefore, if they were just, why would not they allow it in spiritual things? And much *more* in them, agreeably to the vastly greater importance, and more affecting nature of spiritual things, and the concern which true religion causes in men's minds for the good of others, and the disposition it gives and excites to speak God's praises, to show forth his infinite glory, and talk of all his glorious perfections and works?

That a very great sense, of the right kind, of the importance of the things of religion, and the danger sinners are in, should sometimes cause an almost insuperable disposition to speak and warn others, is agreeable to Jer. vi. 10, 11: "To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear? Behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: behold, the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it. Therefore I am full of the fury of the Lord; I am weary with holding in; I will pour it out upon the children abroad, and upon the assembly of the young men together; for even the husband with the wife shall be taken, the aged with him that is full of days." And that true Christians, when they come to be as it were waked out of sleep, and to be filled with a sweet and joyful sense of the excellent things of religion, by the preaching of the gospel, or by other means of grace, should be disposed to be much in speaking of divine things, though before they were dumb, is agreeable to what Christ says to his church, Cant. vii. 9: "And the roof of thy mouth is like the best wine, for my beloved, that goeth down sweetly, causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak." The roof of the church's mouth, is the officers in the church, that preach the gospel; their word is to Christ's beloved, like the best wine, that goes down sweetly: extraordinarily refreshing and enlivening the saints, causing them to speak, though before they were mute and asleep. It is said by some that the people that are the subjects of this work, when they get together, talking loudly and earnestly, in their pretended great joys, several in a room, talking at the same time, make a noise just like a company of drunken persons. On which I would observe, that it is foretold that God's people should do so, in that forementioned place, Zech. ix. 15, 16, 17, which I shall now take more particular notice of: the words are as follows: "The Lord of hosts shall defend them; and they shall

devour and subdue with sling-stones; and they shall drink, and make a noise, as through wine, and they shall be filled like bowls, and as the corners of the altar: and the Lord their God shall save them in that day, as the flock of his people; for they shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted up, as an ensign, upon his land: for how great is his goodness! And how great is his beauty! Corn shall make the young men cheerful, and new wine the maids." The words are very remarkable: here it is foretold, that at the time when Christ shall set up a universal kingdom upon earth (ver. 20), the children of Zion shall drink, until they are filled like the vessels of the sanctuary: and if we would know what they shall be thus filled with, the prophecy does, in effect, explain itself: they shall be filled, as the vessels of the sanctuary that contained the drink offering, which was wine; and yet the words imply, that it shall not literally be wine that they shall drink, and be filled with, because it is said, they shall drink, and make a noise *as through wine*, as if they had drank wine: which implies that they had not literally done it; and therefore we must understand the words, that they shall drink into that, and be filled with that, which the wine of the drink offering represented, or was a type of, which is the Holy Spirit, as well as the blood of Christ, that new wine that is drunk in our heavenly Father's kingdom: they shall be filled with the Spirit, which the apostle sets in opposition to a being drunk with wine, Eph. v. 18. This is the new wine spoken of, ver. 17. It is the same with that *best wine* spoken of in *Canticles, that goes down sweetly, causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak.* It is here foretold, that the children of Zion, in the latter days, should be filled with that which should make them cheerful, and cause them to make a noise as through wine, and by which these joyful happy persons that are thus filled, shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon God's land, being made joyful, in the extraordinary manifestations of the beauty and love of Christ: as it follows, *How great is his goodness! And how great is his beauty!* And it is further remarkable that it is here foretold, that it should be thus especially amongst young people: *Corn shall make the young men cheerful, and new wine the maids.* It would be ridiculous to understand this of literal bread and wine: without doubt, the same spiritual blessings are signified by bread and wine here, which were represented by Melchizedeck's bread and wine, and are signified by the bread and wine in the Lord's supper. One of the marginal readings is, *shall make the young men to speak*, which is agreeable to that in Canticles, of the *best wine's causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak.*

We ought not to be, in any measure, like the unbelieving Jews in Christ's time, who were disgusted both with crying out with distress, and with joy.—When the poor blind man cried out, before all the multitude, *Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me*, and continued instantly thus doing, the multitude rebuked him, and charged him that he should hold his tongue, Mark x. 46, 47, 48, and Luke xviii. 38, 39. They looked upon it to be a very indecent noise that he made; a thing very ill becoming him to cause his voice to be heard, so much, and so loud, among the multitude. And when Christ made his solemn and triumphant entry into Jerusalem (which, I have before observed, was a type of the glory and triumph of the latter days), the whole multitude of the disciples, of all sorts, especially young people, began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice, for all the mighty works that they had seen, saying, *Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest!* The Pharisees said to Christ, *Master, rebuke thy disciples.* They did not understand such great transports of joy; it seemed to them a very unsuitable

and indecent noise and clamor that they made, a confused uproar, many crying out together, as though they were out of their wits; they wondered that Christ would tolerate it. But what says Christ? *I tell you, that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.* The words seems to intimate as much, as that there was cause enough to constrain those whose hearts were not harder than the very stones, to cry out and make a noise; which is something like that other expression, of *causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak*

When many under great religious affections, are earnestly speaking together, of divine wonders, in various parts of a company, to those that are next to them; some attending to what one says, and others to another, there is something very beautiful in it, provided they do not speak so many as to drown each other's voices, that none can hear what any say; there is a greater and more affecting appearance of a joint engagedness of heart, in the love and praises of God. And I had rather see it, than to see one speaking alone, and all attending to what he says; it has more of the appearance of conversation. When a multitude meet on any occasion of temporal rejoicing, freely and cheerfully to converse together, they are not wont to observe the ceremony of but one speaking at a time, while all the rest, in a formal manner, set themselves to attend to what he says; that would spoil all conversation, and turn it into the formality of set speeches, and the solemnity of preaching. It is better for lay persons, when they speak one to another of the things of God, when they meet together, to speak after the manner of Christian conversation, than to observe the formality of but one speaking at a time, the whole multitude silently and solemnly attending to what he says; which would carry in it too much of the air, of the authority and solemnity of preaching. What the apostle says, 1 Cor. xiv. 29, 30, 31, "Let the prophets speak, two or three, and let the other judge: if any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace: for ye may all prophesy, one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted," I say, this does not reach this case; because what the apostle is speaking of is the solemnity of their religious exercises, in public worship, and persons speaking in the church, by immediate inspiration, and in the use of the gift of prophesy, or some gift of inspiration, in the exercise of which they acted as extraordinary ministers of Christ.

Another thing that some have found fault with, is abounding so much in singing, in religious meetings. Objecting against such a thing as this seems to arise from a suspicion already established of this work: they doubt of the pretended extraordinary love and joys that attend this work, and so find fault with the manifestations of them. If they thought persons were truly the subjects of an extraordinary degree of divine love, and heavenly rejoicing in God, I suppose they would not wonder at their having a disposition to be much in praise. They will not object against the saints and angels in heaven singing praises and hallelujahs to God, without ceasing, day or night; and therefore doubtless will allow that the more the saints on earth are like them in their dispositions, the more they will be disposed to do like them. They will readily own that the generality of Christians have great reason to be ashamed that they have so little thankfulness, and are no more in praising God, whom they have such infinite cause to praise. And why therefore should Christians be found fault with, for showing a disposition to be much in praising God, and manifesting a delight in that heavenly exercise? To complain of this, is to be too much like the Pharisees, who were disgusted when the multitude of the disciples began to rejoice, and, with loud voices to praise God, and cry *Hosanna*, when Christ was entering into Jerusalem.

There are many things in Scripture that seem to intimate, that praising God, both in speeches and songs, will be what the church of God will very much abound in, in the approaching glorious day. So on the seventh day of compassing the walls of Jericho, when the priests blew with the trumpets, in an extraordinary manner, the people shouted with a great shout, and the wall of the city fell down flat. So the ark was brought back from its banishment, with extraordinary shouting and singing of the whole congregation of Israel. And the places in the prophecies of Scripture, that signify that the church of God, in that glorious jubilee that is foretold, shall greatly abound in singing and shouting forth the praises of God, are too many to be mentioned. And there will be cause enough for it: I believe it will be a time wherein both heaven and earth will be much more full of joy and praise, than ever they were before. But what is more especially found fault with in the singing that is now practised, is making use of hymns of human composure. And I am far from thinking that the book of Psalms should be thrown by in our public worship, but that it should always be used in the Christian church, to the end of the world: but I know of no obligation we are under to confine ourselves to it. I can find no command or rule of God's word, that does any more confine us to the words of the Scripture in our singing, than it does in our praying; we speak to God in both: and I can see no reason why we should limit ourselves to such particular forms of words, that we find in the Bible, in speaking to him by way of praise, in metre, and with music, than when we speak to him in prose, by way of prayer and supplication. And it is really needful that we should have some other songs besides the psalms of David: it is unreasonable to suppose that the Christian church, should forever, and even in times of her greatest light in her praises of God and the Lamb, be confined only to the words of the Old Testament, wherein all the greatest and most glorious things of the gospel, that are infinitely the greatest subjects of her praise, are spoken of under a vail, and not so much as the name of our glorious Redeemer, ever mentioned, but in some dark figure, or as hid under the name of some type. And as to our making use of the words of others, and not those that are conceived by ourselves, it is no more than we do in all our public prayers; the whole worshipping assembly, excepting one only, makes use of the words, that are conceived by him that speaks for the rest.

Another thing that many have disliked, is the religious meetings of children, to read and pray together, and perform religious exercises by themselves. What is objected is children's want of that knowledge and discretion, that is requisite, in order to a decent and profitable management of religious exercises. But it appears to me the objection is not sufficient: children, as they have the nature of men, are inclined to society; and those of them that are capable of society one with another, are capable of the influences of the Spirit of God, in its active fruits; and if they are inclined by a religious disposition, that they have from the Spirit of God, to improve their society one with another, in a religious manner, and to religious purposes, who should forbid them? If they have not discretion to observe method in their religious performances, or to speak sense in all that they say in prayer, they may notwithstanding have a good meaning, and God understands them, and it does not spoil or interrupt their devotion one for another. We that are grown persons, have defects in our prayers, that are a thousand times worse in the sight of God, and are a greater confusion, and more absurd nonsense in his eyes, than their childish indiscretions. There is not so much difference before God, between children and grown persons, as we are ready to imagine; we are all poor, ignorant, foolish babes, in

his sight: our adult age does not bring us so much nearer to God, as we are apt to think. God in this work has shown a remarkable regard to little children; never was there such a glorious work amongst persons in their childhood, as has been of late, in New England: he has been pleased in a wonderful manner to perfect praise out of the mouths of babes and sucklings; and many of them have more of that knowledge and wisdom, that pleases him, and renders their religious worship acceptable, than many of the great and learned men of the world; it is they, in the sight of God, are the ignorant and foolish children: these are grown men, and a hundred years old, in comparison with them; and it is to be hoped that the days are coming, prophesied of Isa. lxv. 20, when "the child shall die a hundred years old."

I have seen many happy effects of children's religious meetings; and God has seemed often remarkably to own them in their meetings, and really descended from heaven to be amongst them: I have known several probable instances of children's being converted at such meetings. I should therefore think, that if children appear to be really moved to it, by a religious disposition, and not merely from a childish affectation of imitating grown persons, they ought by no means to be discouraged or discountenanced: but yet it is fit that care should be taken of them, by their parents, and pastors, to instruct and direct them, and to correct imprudent conduct and irregularities, if they are perceived; or any thing by which the devil may pervert and destroy the design of their meetings. All should take heed that they do not find fault with, and despise the religion of children, from an evil principle, lest they should be like the chief priests and scribes, who were sore displeased at the religious worship and praises of little children, and the honor they gave Christ in the temple. We have an account of it, and what Christ said upon it, in Matt. xxi. 15, 16: "And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David, they were sore displeased, and said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea: have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?"

PART IV.

Showing what things are to be corrected or avoided, in promoting this Work, or in our behavior under it.

Having thus observed, in some instances, wherein the conduct of those that have appeared to be the subjects of this work, or have been zealous to promote it, has been objected against, or complained of, without or beyond just cause, I proceed now,

II. To show what things ought to be corrected or avoided.

Many that are zealous for this glorious work of God, are heartily sick of the great noise there is in the country, about *imprudences* and *disorders:* they have heard it so often from the mouths of opposers that they are prejudiced against the sound; and they look upon it that that which is called a being *prudent* and *regular*, which is so much insisted on, is no other than being asleep, or cold and dead in religion, and that the great imprudence that is so much cried out of, is only a being alive, and engaged in the things of God: and they are therefore rather confirmed in any practice, than brought off from it, by the clamor they

hear against it, as imprudent and irregular. And to tell the truth, the cry of irregularity and imprudence has been much more in the mouths of those that have been enemies to the main of the work than others; for they have watched for the halting of the zealous, and eagerly catched at any thing that has been wrong, and have greatly insisted on it, made the most of it and magnified it; especially have they watched for errors in zealous preachers, that are much in reproving and condemning the wickedness of the times: they would therefore do well to consider that scripture, Isa. xxix. 20, 21: "The scorner is consumed, and all that watch for iniquity, are cut off, that make a man an offender for a word, and lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate, and turn aside the just for a thing of nought." They have not only too much insisted on, and magnified real errors, but have very injuriously charged them as guilty, in things wherein they have been innocent, and have done their duty. This has so prejudiced the minds of some, that they have been ready to think that all that has been said about errors and imprudences, was injurious and from an ill spirit; and has confirmed them in it, that there is no such thing as any prevailing imprudences; and it has made them less cautious and suspicious of themselves, lest they should err. Herein the devil has had an advantage put into his hands and has taken the advantage; and, doubtless, has been too subtle for some of the true friends of religion. That would be a strange thing indeed, if in so great a commotion and revolution, and such a new state of things, wherein so many have been engaged, none have been guilty of any imprudence; it would be such a revival of religion, as never was yet, if among so many men, not guided by infallible inspiration, there had not been prevailing a pretty many notable errors in judgment and conduct; our young preachers, and young converts, must in general vastly exceed Luther, the head of the reformation, who was guilty of a great many excesses, in that great affair, in which God made him the chief instrument.

If we look back into the history of the church of God in past ages, we may observe that it has been a common device of the devil, to overset a revival of religion, when he finds he can keep men quiet and secure no longer, then to drive them to excesses and extravagances. He holds them back as long as he can, but when he can do it no longer, then he will push them on, and if possible, run them upon their heads. And it has been by these means chiefly, that he has been successful, in several instances, to overthrow most hopeful and promising beginnings: yea, the principal means by which the devil was successful, by degrees, to overset that grand religious revival of the world, that was in the primitive ages of Christianity, and in a manner, to overthrow the Christian church through the earth, and to make way for, and bring on the great antichristian apostasy, that masterpiece of the devil's work, was to improve the indiscreet zeal of Christians, to drive them into those three extremes, of *enthusiasm*, *superstition*, and *severity towards opposers*; which should be enough for an everlasting warning to the Christian church.

Though the devil will do his diligence to stir up the open enemies of religion, yet he knows what is for his interest so well, that in a time of revival of religion, his main strength shall be tried with the friends of it, and he will chiefly exert himself in his attempts upon them, to mislead them. One truly zealous person, in the time of such an event, that seems to have a great hand in the affair, and draws the eyes of many upon him, may do more, through Satan's being too subtle for him, to hinder the work, than a hundred great, and strong, and open opposers.

In the time of a great work of Christ, his hands, with which he *works*, are

often wounded in the house of his friends; and his work hindered chiefly by them: so that if any one inquires, as in Zech. xiii. 6, "What are those wounds in thine hands?" he may answer, "Those, with which I was wounded in the house of my friends."

The errors of the friends of the work of God, and especially of the great promoters of it, give vast advantage to the enemies of such a work. Indeed there are many things that are no errors, but are only duties faithfully and thoroughly done, that wound the minds of such persons more, and are more cross to them, than real errors: but yet one real error gives opposers as much advantage, and hinders and clogs the work as much as ten that are only supposed ones. Real errors do not fret and gall the enemies of religion, so much as those things that are strictly right; but they encourage them more; they give them liberty and open a gap for them; so that some that before kept their enmity burning in their own bowels, and durst not show themselves, will on such an occasion take courage, and give themselves vent, and their rage will be like that of an enemy let loose; and those that lay still before, having nothing to say, but what they would be ashamed of (agreeable to Tit. ii. 8), when they have such a weapon put into their hands will fight with all violence. And indeed the enemies of religion would not know what to do for weapons to fight with, were it not for the errors of the friends of it; and so must soon fall before them. And besides in real errors, things that are truly disagreeable to the rules of God's word, we cannot expect the divine protection, and that God will appear on our side, as if our errors were only supposed ones.

Since therefore the errors of the friends and promoters of such a glorious work of God, are of such dreadful consequence; and seeing the devil, being sensible of this, is so assiduous, and watchful and subtle in his attempts with them, and has thereby been so successful to overthrow religion heretofore, certainly such persons ought to be exceeding circumspect and vigilant, diffident and jealous of themselves, and humbly dependent on the guidance of the good Shepherd. 1 Pet. iv. 7, "Be sober, and watch unto prayer." And chap. v. 8, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about." For persons to go on resolutely in a kind of heat and vehemence, despising admonition and correction, being confident that they must be in the right, because they are full of the Spirit, is directly contrary to the import of these words, *be sober, be vigilant.*

It is a mistake I have observed in some, by which they have been greatly exposed, to their wounding, that they think they are in no danger of going astray, or being misled by the devil, because they are near to God; and so have no jealous eye upon themselves, and neglect vigilance and circumspection, as needless in their case. They say they do not think that God will leave them to dishonor him, and wound religion as long as they keep near to him: and I believe so too, as long as they keep near to God in that respect, that they maintain a universal and diligent watch, and care to do their duty, and avoid sin, and snares, with diffidence in themselves, and humble dependence and prayerfulness: but not merely because they are near to God, in that respect, that they now are receiving blessed communications from God, in refreshing views of him; if at the same time they let down their watch, and are not jealous over their own hearts, by reason of its remaining blindness and corruption, and a subtle adversary. It is a grand error, for persons to think they are out of danger of the devil, and a corrupt deceitful heart, even in their highest flights, and most raised frames of spiritual joy. For persons in such a confidence, to cease to be jealous of themselves, and to neglect watchfulness and care, is a presumption by which

I have known many wofully ensnared. However highly we may be favored with divine discoveries and comforts, yet as long as we are in the world, we are in the enemy's country; and therefore that direction of Christ to his disciples, is never out of date in this world, Luke xxi. 36: "Watch and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things, and to stand before the Son of man."

It was not out of date with the disciples, to whom it was given, after they came to be filled so full with the Holy Ghost, and out of their bellies flowed rivers of living water, by that great effusion of the Spirit upon them, that began on the day of pentecost. And though God stands ready to protect his people, especially those that are near to him, yet he expects great care and labor of all; and that we should put on the whole armor of God, that we may stand in the evil day: and whatever spiritual privileges we are raised to, we have no warrant to expect protection in any other way; for God has appointed this whole life, as a state of labor, to be all, as a race or a battle; the state of rest wherein we shall be so out of danger, as to have no need of watching and fighting, is reserved for another world. I have known it in abundance of instances, that the devil is come in very remarkably, even in the midst of the most exalted, and upon some accounts excellent frames: it may seem a great mystery that it should be so; but it is no greater mystery, than that Christ should be taken captive by the devil, and carried into the wilderness, immediately after the heavens had been opened to him, and the Holy Ghost descended like a dove upon him, and he heard that comfortable, joyful voice from the Father, saying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* In like manner Christ in the heart of a Christian, is oftentimes as it were taken by the devil, and carried captive into a wilderness, presently after heaven has been, as it were opened to the soul, and the Holy Ghost has descended upon it like a dove, and God has been sweetly owning the believer, and testifying his favor to him as his beloved child.

It is therefore a great error, and sin in some persons, at this day, that they are fixed in their way, in some things that others account errors, and will not hearken to admonition and counsel, but are confident that they are in the right of it, in those practices that they find themselves disposed to, because God is much with them, and they have great degrees of the Spirit of God. There were some such in the the apostles' days: the Apostle Paul, writing to the Corinthians, was sensible that some of them would not be easily convinced that they had been in any error, because they looked upon themselves *spiritual*, or full of the Spirit of God. 1 Cor. xiv. 37, 38, "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you, are the commandment of the Lord; but if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant."

And although those that are spiritual amongst us, have no infallible apostle to admonish them, yet let me entreat them, by the love of Christ, calmly and impartially to weigh what may be said to them, by one that is their hearty and fervent friend (although an inferior worm), in giving his humble opinion, concerning the errors that have been committed, or that we may be exposed to, in methods or practices that have been, or may be fallen into, by the zealous friends or promoters of this great work of God.

In speaking of the errors that have been, or that we are in danger of, I would,

First, take notice of the causes whence the errors that attend a great revival of religion usually arise: and as I go along, take notice of some particular errors that arise from each of those causes.

Secondly, observe some errors, that some have lately gone into, that have been owing to the influence of several of those causes conjunctly.

As to the first of these, the errors that attend a great revival of religion, usually arise from these three things:

1. Undiscerned spiritual pride.
2. Wrong principles.
3. Ignorance of Satan's advantages and devices.

The first, and the worst cause of errors, that prevail in such a state of things, is *spiritual pride*. This is the main door, by which the devil comes into the hearts of those that are zealous for the advancement of religion. It is the chief inlet of smoke from the bottomless pit, to darken the mind, and mislead the judgment: this is the main handle by which the devil has hold of religious persons, and the chief source of all the mischief that he introduces, to clog and hinder a work of God. This cause of error is the main-spring, or at least the main support of all the rest. Until this disease is cured, medicines are in vain applied to heal other diseases. It is by this that the mind defends itself in other errors, and guards itself against light, by which it might be corrected and reclaimed. The spiritually proud man is full of light already, he does not need instruction, and is ready to despise the offer of it. But if this disease be healed, other things are easily rectified. The humble person is like a little child, he easily receives instruction; he is jealous over himself, sensible how liable he is to go astray; and therefore if it be suggested to him that he does so, he is ready most narrowly and impartially to inquire. Nothing sets a person so much out of the devil's reach, as humility, and so prepares the mind for true divine light, without darkness, and so clears the eye to look on things as they truly are. Psal. xxv. 9, "The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek he will teach his way." Therefore we should fight, neither with small, nor with great, but with the king of Israel: our first care should be to rectify the heart, and pull the beam out of our eye, and then we shall see clearly.

I know that a great many things at this day, are very injuriously laid to the pride of those that are zealous in the cause of God. When any person appears, in any respect, remarkably distinguished in religion from others, if he professes those spiritual comforts and joys that are greater than ordinary, or if he appears distinguishingly zealous in religion, if he exerts himself more than others do, in the cause of religion, or if he seems to be distinguished with success, ten to one, but it will immediately awaken the jealousy of those that are about him; and they will suspect (whether they have cause or no), that he is very proud of his goodness, and that he affects to have it thought that nobody is so good as he; and all his talk is heard, and all his behavior beheld, with this prejudice. Those that are themselves cold and dead, and especially such as never had any experience of the power of godliness on their own hearts, are ready to entertain such thoughts of the best Christians; which arises from a secret enmity against vital and fervent piety.

But then those that are zealous Christians should take heed that this injuriousness of those that are cold in religion does not prove a snare to them, and the devil does not take advantage from it, to blind their eyes from beholding what there is indeed of this nature in their hearts, and make them think, because they are charged with pride wrongfully, and from an ill spirit, in many things, that therefore it is so in every thing.—Alas, how much pride have the best of us in our hearts! It is the worst part of the body of sin and death: it is the first sin that ever entered into the universe, and the last that is rooted out: it is God's most stubborn enemy.

The corruption of nature may all be resolved into two things, *pride* and *worldly-mindedness*, the *devil* and the *beast*, or *self* and the *world*. These are the two pillars of Dagon's temple, on which the whole house leans. But the former of these is, every way, the worst part of the corruption of nature; it is the first born son of the devil, and his image in the heart of man chiefly consists in it; it is the last thing in a sinner that is overborne by conviction, in order to conversion; and here is the saint's hardest conflict; it is the last thing that he obtains a good degree of conquest over, and liberty from; it is that which most directly militates against God, and is most contrary to the Spirit of the Lamb of God; and it is most like the devil its father, in a serpentine deceitfulness and secrecy: it lies deepest, and is most active, is most ready secretly to mix itself with every thing.

And of all kinds of pride, spiritual pride is upon many accounts the most hateful; it is most like the devil; it is most like the sin that he committed in a heaven of light and glory, where he was exalted high in divine knowledge, honor, beauty and happiness. Pride is much more difficultly discerned than any other corruption, for this reason, that the nature of it does very much consist in a person's having too high a thought of himself: but no wonder that he that has too high a thought of himself, does not know it; for he necessarily thinks that the opinion he has of himself, is what he has just grounds for, and therefore not too high; if he thought such an opinion of himself was without just grounds, he would therein cease to have it. But of all kinds of pride, spiritual pride is the most hidden, and difficultly discovered; and that for this reason, because those that are spiritually proud, their pride consists much in a high conceit of those two things, viz., their *light*, and their *humility;* both which are a strong prejudice against a discovery of their pride. Being proud of their *light*, that makes them not jealous of themselves; he that thinks a clear light shines around him, is not suspicious of any enemy lurking near him, unseen: and then being proud of their *humility*, that makes them least of all jealous of themselves in that particular, viz., as being under the prevalence of pride. There are many sins of the heart that are very secret in their nature, and difficultly discerned. The Psalmist says, Psal. xix. 12, "Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults." But spiritual pride is the most secret of all sins. The heart is so deceitful and unsearchable in nothing in the world, as it is in this matter, and there is no sin in the world, that men are so confident in, and so difficultly convinced of: the very nature of it is to work self-confidence, and drive away self-diffidence, and jealousy of any evil of that kind. There is no sin so much like the devil, as this, for secrecy and subtlety, and appearing in a great many shapes, undiscerned and unsuspected, and appearing as an angel of light: it takes occasion to arise from every thing; it perverts and abuses every thing, and even the exercises of real grace, and real humility, as an occasion to exert itself: it is a sin that has, as it were, many lives; if you kill it, it will live still; if you mortify and suppress it in one shape, it rises in another; if you think it is all gone, yet it is there still: there are a great many kinds of it, that lie in different forms and shapes, one under another, and encompass the heart like the coats of an onion; if you pull off one there is another underneath.—We had need therefore to have the greatest watch imaginable, over our hearts, with respect to this matter, and to cry most earnestly to the great searcher of hearts, for his help. He that trusts his own heart is a fool.

God's own people should be the more jealous of themselves, with respect to this particular, at this day, because the temptations that many have to this sin

are exceeding great: the great and distinguishing privileges to which God admits many of his saints, and the high honors that he puts on some ministers, are great trials of persons in this respect. It is true that great degrees of the spiritual presence of God tend greatly to mortify pride and all corruption; but yet, though in the experience of such favors, there be much to restrain pride one way, there is much to tempt and provoke it another; and we shall be in great danger thereby without great watchfulness and prayerfulness. There was much in the circumstances that the angels that fell, were in, in heaven, in their great honors and high privileges, in beholding the face of God, and view of his infinite glory, to cause in them exercises of humility, and to keep them from pride; yet through want of watchfulness in them, their great honor and heavenly privilege proved to be to them, an undoing temptation to pride, though they had no principle of pride in their hearts to expose them. Let no saint therefore, however eminent, and however near to God, think himself out of danger of this: he that thinks himself most out of danger, is indeed most in danger. The apostle Paul, who doubtless was as eminent a saint as any are now, was not out of danger, even just after he was admitted to see God in the third heavens, by the information he himself gives us, 2 Cor. chap. xii. And yet doubtless, what he saw in heaven of the ineffable glory of the divine Being, had a direct tendency to make him appear exceeding little and vile in his own eyes.

Spiritual pride in its own nature is so secret, that it is not so well discerned by immediate intuition on the thing itself, as by the effects and fruits of it; some of which, I would mention, together with the contrary fruits of pure Christian humility.

Spiritual pride disposes to speak of other persons' sins, their enmity against God and his people, the miserable delusion of hypocrites and their enmity against vital piety, and the deadness of some saints, with bitterness, or with laughter and levity, and an air of contempt; whereas pure Christian humility rather disposes, either to be silent about them, or to speak of them with grief and pity.

Spiritual pride is very apt to suspect others: whereas a humble saint is most jealous of himself, he is so suspicious of nothing in the world as he is of his own heart. The spiritually proud person is apt to find fault with other saints, that they are low in grace, and to be much in observing how cold and dead they be, and crying out of them for it, and to be quick to discern and take notice of their deficiencies: but the eminently humble Christian has so much to do at home, and sees so much evil in his own heart, and is so concerned about it, that he is not apt to be very busy with others' hearts; he complains most of himself, and cries out of his own coldness and lowness in grace, and is apt to esteem others better than himself, and is ready to hope that there is nobody but what has more love and thankfulness to God than he, and cannot bear to think that others should bring forth no more fruit to God's honor than he. Some that have spiritual pride mixed with high discoveries and great transports of joy, that dispose them in an earnest manner to talk to others, are apt, in such frames, to be calling upon other Christians that are about them, and sharply reproving them for their being so cold and lifeless. And there are some others that behave themselves very differently from these, who in their raptures are overwhelmed with a sense of their own vileness; and when they have extraordinary discoveries of God's glory, are all taken up about their own sinfulness; and though they also are disposed to speak much and very earnestly, yet it is very much in crying out of themselves, and exhorting fellow Christians, but in a charitable and humble manner. Pure Christian humility disposes a person to take notice

of every thing that is in any respect good in others, and to make the best of it, and to diminish their failings; but to have his eye chiefly on those things that are bad in himself, and to take much notice of every thing that aggravates them.

In a contrariety to this, it has been the manner in some places, or at least the manner of some persons, to speak of almost every thing that they see amiss in others, in the most harsh, severe and terrible language. It is frequent with them to say of others' opinions or conduct or advice, or of their coldness, their silence, their caution, their moderation, and their prudence, and many other things that appear in them, that they are from the devil, or from hell; that such a thing is devilish, or hellish, or cursed, and that such persons are serving the devil, or the devil is in them, that they are soul murderers, and the like; so that the words *devil* and *hell* are almost continually in their mouths. And such kind of language they will commonly use, not only towards wicked men, but towards them that they themselves allow to be the true children of God, and also towards ministers of the gospel and others that are very much their superiors. And they look upon it a virtue and high attainment, thus to behave themselves.—*Oh*, say they, *we must be plain hearted and bold for Christ, we must declare war against sin wherever we see it, we must not mince the matter in the cause of God, and when speaking for Christ.* And to make any distinction in persons, or to speak the more tenderly, because that which is amiss is seen in a superior, they look upon as very mean for a follower of Christ, when speaking in the cause of his master.

What a strange device of the devil is here to overthrow all Christian meekness and gentleness, and even all show and appearance of it, and to defile the mouths of the children of God, and to introduce the language of common sailors among the followers of Christ, under a cloak of high sanctity and zeal and boldness for Christ! And it is a remarkable instance of the weakness of the human mind, and how much too cunning the devil is for us!

The grand defence of this way of talking is, that they say no more than what is true; they only speak the truth without mincing the matter; and that true Christians that have a great sight of the evil of sin, and acquaintance with their own hearts know it to be true, and therefore will not be offended to hear such harsh expressions made use of concerning them and their sins; it is only (say they) hypocrites, or cold and dead Christians, that are provoked and feel their enmity rise on such an occasion.

But it is a grand mistake to think that we may commonly use concerning one another all such language as represents the worst of each other, according to strict truth. It is really true that every kind of sin, and every degree of it, is devilish and from hell, and is cursed, hellish, and condemned or damned: and if persons had a full sight of their hearts they would think no terms too bad for them; they would look like beasts, like serpents, and like devils to themselves; they would be at a loss for language to express what they see in themselves, the worst terms they could think of, would seem as it were faint to represent what they see in themselves. But shall a child therefore, from time to time, use such language concerning an excellent and eminently holy father or mother, as that the devil is in them, that they have such and such devilish, cursed dispositions, that they commit every day hundreds of hellish, damned acts, and that they are cursed dogs, hell-hounds, and devils? And shall the meanest of the people be justified, in commonly using such language concerning the most excellent magistrates, or their most eminent ministers? I hope nobody has gone to this height: but the same pretences of boldness, plain-heartedness, and de-

clared war against sin, will as well justify these things as the things they are actually made use of to justify. If we proceed in such a manner, on such principles as these, what a face will be introduced upon the church of Christ, the little beloved flock of that gentle shepherd the Lamb of God! What a sound shall we bring into the house of God, into the family of his dear little children! How far off shall we soon banish that lovely appearance of humility, sweetness, gentleness, mutual honor, benevolence, complacence, and an esteem of others above themselves, which ought to clothe the children of God all over! Not but that Christians should watch over one another, and in any wise reprove one another, and be much in it, and do it plainly and faithfully; but it does not thence follow that dear brethren in the family of God, in rebuking one another, should use worse language than Michael the archangel durst use when rebuking the devil himself.

Christians that are but fellow worms ought at least to treat one another with as much humility and gentleness as Christ that is infinitely above them treats them. But how did Christ treat his disciples when they were so cold towards him and so regardless of him, at the time when his soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto death, and he in a dismal agony was crying and sweating blood for them, and they would not watch with him, and allow him the comfort of their company one hour in his great distress, though he once and again desired it of them? One would think that then was a proper time if ever to have reproved them for a devilish, hellish, cursed and damned slothfulness and deadness. But after what manner does Christ reprove them? Behold his astonishing gentleness! Says he, *What, could ye not watch with me one hour? The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.* And how did he treat Peter when he was ashamed of his master, while he was made a mocking stock and a spitting stock for him? Why he looked upon him with a look of love, and melted his heart.

And though we read that Christ once turned and said unto Peter, on a certain occasion, *Get thee behind me, Satan;* and this may seem like an instance of harshness and severity in reproving Peter; yet I humbly conceive that this is by many taken wrong, and that this is indeed no instance of Christ's severity in his treatment of Peter, but on the contrary, of his wonderful gentleness and grace, distinguishing between Peter and the devil in him, not laying the blame of what Peter had then said, or imputing it to him, but to the devil that influenced him. Christ saw the devil then present, secretly influencing Peter to do the part of a tempter to his master; and therefore Christ turned him about to Peter, in whom the devil then was, and spake to the devil and rebuked him. Thus the grace of Christ does not behold iniquity in his people, imputes not what is amiss in them to them, but to sin that dwells in them, and to Satan that influences them. But to return:

Spiritual pride often disposes persons to singularity in external appearance, to affect a singular way of speaking, to use a different sort of dialect from others, or to be singular in voice, or air of countenance or behavior: but he that is an eminently humble Christian, though he will be firm to his duty, however singular he is in it; he will go in the way that leads to heaven alone, though all the world forsakes him; yet he delights not in singularity for singularity's sake, he does not affect to set up himself to be viewed and observed as one distinguished, as desiring to be accounted better than others, or despising their company, or a union and conformity to them; but on the contrary is disposed to become all things to all men, and to yield to others, and conform to them and please them, in every thing but sin. Spiritual pride commonly occasions a certain stiffness and inflexibility in persons, in their own judgment and

their own ways; whereas the eminently humble person, though he be inflexible in his duty, and in those things wherein God's honor is concerned; and with regard to temptation to those things he apprehends to be sinful, though in never so small a degree, he is not at all of a yieldable spirit, but is like a brazen wall; yet in other things he is of a pliable disposition, not disposed to set up his own opinion, or his own will; he is ready to pay deference to others' opinions, and loves to comply with their inclinations, and has a heart that is tender and flexible like a little child.

Spiritual pride disposes persons to affect separation, to stand at a distance from others, as better than they, and loves the show and appearance of the distinction: but on the contrary, the eminently humble Christian is ready to look upon himself as not worthy that others should be united to him, to think himself more brutish than any man, and worthy to be cast out of human society, and especially unworthy of the society of God's children; and though he will not be a companion with one that is visibly Christ's enemy, and delights most in the company of lively Christians, will choose such for his companions, and will be most intimate with them, and does not at all delight to spend away much time in the company of those that seem to relish no conversation but about worldly things; yet he does not love the appearance of an open separation from visible Christians, as being a kind of distinct company from them, that are one visible company with him by Christ's appointment, and will as much as possible shun all appearances of a superiority, or distinguishing himself as better than others: his universal benevolence delights in the appearance of union with his fellow creatures, and will maintain it as much as he possibly can, without giving open countenance to iniquity, or wounding his own soul; and herein he follows the example of his meek and lowly Redeemer, who did not keep such a separation and distance as the Pharisees, but freely ate with publicans and sinners, that he might win them.

The eminently humble Christian is as it were clothed with lowliness, mildness, meekness, gentleness of spirit and behavior, and with a soft, sweet, condescending, winning air and deportment; these things are just like garments to him, he is clothed all over with them. 1 Pet. v. 5, "And be clothed with humility." Col. iii. 12, "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering.

Pure Christian humility has no such thing as roughness, or contempt; or fierceness or bitterness, in its nature; it makes a person like a little child, harmless and innocent, and that none need to be afraid of; or like a lamb, destitute of all bitterness, wrath, anger, and clamor, agreeable to Eph. iv. 31.

With such a spirit as this ought especially zealous ministers of the gospel to be clothed, and those that God is pleased to improve as instruments in his hands of promoting his work: they ought indeed to be thorough in preaching the word of God, without mincing the matter at all; in handling the sword of the Spirit, as the ministers of the Lord of Hosts, they ought not to be mild and gentle; they are not to be gentle and moderate in searching and awakening the conscience, but should be sons of thunder: the word of God, which is in itself sharper than any two-edged sword, ought not to be sheathed by its ministers, but so used that its sharp edges may have their full effect, even to the dividing asunder soul and spirit, joints and marrow (provided they do it without judging particular persons, leaving it to conscience and the Spirit of God to make the particular application); but all their conversation should savor of nothing but lowliness and good will, love and pity to all mankind; so that such

a spirit should be like a sweet odor diffused around them wherever they go, or like a light shining about them, their faces should, as it were, shine with it; they should be like lions to guilty consciences, but like lambs to men's persons. This would have no tendency to prevent the awakening of men's consciences, but on the contrary would have a very great tendency to awaken them; it would make way for the sharp sword to enter; it would remove the obstacles, and make a naked breast for the arrow. Yea, the amiable, Christ-like conversation of such ministers, in itself would terrify the consciences of men, as well as their terrible preaching; both would co-operate, one with another, to subdue the hard, and bring down the proud heart. If there had been, constantly and universally observable, such a behavior as this in itinerant preachers, it would have terrified the consciences of sinners, ten times as much as all the invectives, and the censorious talk there has been concerning particular persons, for their opposition, hypocrisy, delusion, pharisaism, &c. These things in general have rather stupified sinners' consciences; they take them up, and make use of them as a shield, wherewith to defend themselves from the sharp arrows of the word, that are shot by these preachers: the enemies of the present work have been glad of these things with all their hearts. Many of the most bitter of them are probably such as in the beginning of this work had their consciences something galled and terrified with it; but these errors of awakening preachers are the things they chiefly make use of as plasters to heal the sore that was made in their consciences.

Spiritual pride takes great notice of opposition and injuries that are received, and is apt to be often speaking of them, and to be much in taking notice of the aggravations of them, either with an air of bitterness or contempt: whereas pure unmixed Christian humility, disposes a person rather to be like his blessed Lord, when reviled, dumb, not opening his mouth, but committing himself in silence to him that judgeth righteously. The eminently humble Christian, the more clamorous and furious the world is against him, the more silent and still will he be; unless it be in his closet, and there he will not be still. Our blessed Lord Jesus seems never to have been so silent as when the world compassed him round, reproaching, buffetting, and spitting on him, with loud and virulent outcries, and horrid cruelties.

There has been a great deal too much talk of late, among many of the true and zealous friends of religion, about opposition and persecution. It becomes the followers of the Lamb of God, when the world is in an uproar about them, and full of clamor against them, not to raise another noise to answer it, but to be still and quiet: it is not beautiful, at such a time to have pulpits and conversation ring with the sound, *persecution, persecution*, or with abundant talk about Pharisees, carnal persecutors, and the seed of the serpent.

Meekness and quietness among God's people, when opposed and reviled, would be the surest way to have God remarkably to appear for their defence. It is particularly observed of Moses, on the occasion of Aaron and Miriam their envying him, and rising up in opposition against him, that he *was very meek, above all men upon the face of the earth*, Num. xii. 3. Doubtless because he remarkably showed his meekness on that occasion, being wholly silent under the abuse. And how remarkable is the account that follows of God's being as it were suddenly roused to appear for his vindication! And what high honor did he put upon Moses! And how severe were his rebukes of his opposers! The story is very remarkable, and worth every one's observing. Nothing is so effectual to bring God down from heaven in the defence of his people, as their patience and meekness under sufferings. When Christ *girds his sword upon*

his thigh, with his glory and majesty, and in his majesty rides prosperously, his right hand teaching him terrible things, it is because of truth and MEEKNESS *and righteousness,* Psal xlv. 3, 4. *God will cause judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth shall fear and be still, and God will arise to judgment,* to save all the MEEK of the earth, Psal. lxxvi. 8, 9. *He will lift up the* meek, *and cast the wicked down to the ground,* Psal. cxlvii. 6. *He will reprove with equity, for the meek of the earth, and will smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips will he slay the wicked.* Isa. xi. 4. The great commendation that Christ gives the church of Philadelphia is, that *Thou hast kept the word of my patience,* Rev. iii. 10. And we may see what reward he promises her in the preceding verse, "Behold I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship at thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee." And thus it is, that we might expect to have Christ appear for us, if under all reproaches we are loaded with, we behave ourselves with a lamb-like meekness and gentleness, but if our spirits are raised, and we are vehement and noisy with our complaints under color of Christian zeal, this will be to take upon us our own defence, and God will leave it with us to vindicate our cause as well as we can: yea, if we go on in a way of bitterness, and high censuring, it will be the way to have him rebuke us, and put us to shame before our enemies.

Here some may be ready to say, "It is not in our own cause, that we are thus vehement, but it is in the cause of God; and the apostle directed the primitive Christians to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." But how was it that the primitive Christians contended earnestly for the faith? They defended the truth with arguments, and a holy conversation; but yet gave their reasons with meekness and fear: they contended earnestly for the faith by fighting violently against their own unbelief, and the corruptions of their hearts, yea, they resisted unto blood striving against sin; but the blood that was shed in this earnest strife, was their own blood, and not the blood of their enemies. It was *in the cause of God,* that Peter was so fierce, and drew his sword, and began to smite with it; but Christ bids him put up his sword again, telling him that they that take the sword shall perish by the sword; and while Peter wounds, Christ heals. They contend the most violently, and are the greatest conquerors in a time of persecution, who bear it with the greatest meekness and patience.

Great humility improves even the reflections and reproaches of enemies, to put upon serious self-examination, whether or no there be not some just cause, whether they have not in some respect given occasion to the enemy to speak reproachfully: whereas spiritual pride improves such reflections to make them the more bold and confident, and to go the greater lengths in that for which they are found fault with. I desire it may be considered whether there has been nothing amiss of late, among the true friends of vital piety in this respect; and whether the words of David, when reviled by Michal, have not been misinterpreted and misapplied to justify them in it, when he said I will be yet more vile, and will be base in mine own sight. The import of his words is that he would humble himself yet more before God, being sensible that he was far from being sufficiently abased; and he signifies this to Michal, and that he longed to be yet lower, and had designed already to abase himself more in his behavior; not that he would go the greater length, to show his regardlessness of her revilings; that would be to exalt himself, and not more to abase himself, as more vile in his own sight.

Another effect of spiritual pride is a certain unsuitable and self-confident

boldness before God and men. Thus some in their great rejoicings before God, have not paid a sufficient regard to that rule, in Psal. ii. 11. They have not rejoiced with a reverential trembling, in a proper sense of the awful majesty of God, and the awful distance between God and them. And there has also been an improper boldness before men, that has been encouraged and defended, by a misapplication of that Scripture, Prov. xxix. 25, "The fear of man bringeth a snare." As though it became all persons, high and low, men, women and children, in all religious conversation, wholly to divest themselves of all manner of shamefacedness, modesty or reverence towards man; which is a great error, and quite contrary to Scripture. There is a fear of reverence that is due to some men. Rom. xii. 7, "Fear, to whom fear: honor, to whom honor." And there is a fear of modesty and shamefacedness, in inferiors towards superiors, that is amiable, and required by Christian rules. 1 Pet. iii. 2, "While they behold your chaste conversation, coupled with fear." And 1 Tim. ii. 9, "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves, in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety." And the apostle means that this virtue shall have place, not only in civil communication, but also in spiritual communication, and in our religious concerns and behavior, as is evident by what follows. Ver. 11, 12, "Let the woman learn in silence, with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." Not that I would hence infer that women's mouths should be shut up from Christian conversation; but all that I mean from it at this time is, that modesty, or shamefacedness, and reverence towards men, ought to have some place, even in our religious communication, one with another. The same is also evident by 1 Pet. iii. 15, "Be ready always to give an answer, to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear." It is well if that very fear and shamefacedness, which the apostle recommends, has not sometimes been condemned, under the name of a *cursed fear* of *man*.

It is beautiful for persons when they are at prayer, as the mouth of others, to make God only their fear and their dread, and to be wholly forgetful of men that are present, who, let them be great or small, are nothing in the presence of the great God. And it is beautiful for a minister, when he speaks in the name of the Lord of hosts, to be bold, and put off all fear of men. And it is beautiful in private Christians, though they are women and children, to be bold in professing the faith of Christ, and in the practice of all religion, and in owning God's hand in the work of his power and grace, without any fear of men, though they should be reproached as fools and madmen, and frowned upon by great men, and cast off by parents and all the world. But for private Christians, women and others, to instruct, rebuke and exhort, with a like sort of boldness as becomes a minister when preaching, is not beautiful.

Some have been bold in some things that have really been errors; and have gloried in their boldness in practising them, though condemned as odd and irregular. And those that have gone the greatest lengths, in these things, have been by some most highly esteemed, as those that come out and appear bold for the Lord Jesus Christ, and fully on his side; and others that have professed to be godly, that have condemned such things, have been spoken of as enemies of the cross of Christ, or at least very cold and dead; and many that of themselves, were not inclined to such practices, have by this means been driven on, being ashamed to be behind, and accounted poor soldiers for Christ.

Another effect of spiritual pride is *assuming*: it oftentimes makes it natural to persons so to act and speak, as though it in a special manner belonged to them to be taken notice of and much regarded. It is very natural to a person

that is much under the influence of spiritual pride, to take all that respect that is paid him: if others show a disposition to submit to him, and yield him the deference of a preceptor, he is open to it, and freely admits it; yea, it is natural for him to expect such treatment, and to take much notice of it if he fails of it, and to have an ill opinion of others that do not pay him that which he looks upon as his prerogative: he is apt to think that it belongs to him to speak, and to clothe himself with a judicial and dogmatical air in conversation, and to take it upon him as what belongs to him, to give forth his sentence, and to determine and decide: whereas pure Christian humility *vaunteth not itself, doth not behave itself unseemly*, and is apt to *prefer others in honor*. One under the influence of spiritual pride is more apt to instruct others, than to inquire for himself, and naturally puts on the airs of a master: whereas one that is full of pure humility, naturally has on the air of a disciple; his voice is, "What shall I do? What shall I do that I may live more to God's honor? What shall I do with this wicked heart?" He is ready to receive instruction from any body, agreeable to Jam. i. 19, "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak." The eminently humble Christian thinks he wants help from every body, whereas he that is spiritually proud thinks that every body wants his help. Christian humility, under a sense of others' misery, entreats and beseeches; spiritual pride affects to command and warn with authority.

There ought to be the utmost watchfulness against all such appearances of spiritual pride, in all that profess to have been the subjects of this work, and especially in the promoters of it, but above all in itinerant preachers: the most eminent gifts, and highest tokens of God's favor and blessing, will not excuse them: alas! What is man at his best estate? What is the most highly favored Christian, or the most eminent and successful minister, that he should now think he is sufficient for something, and somebody to be regarded, and that he should go forth, and act among his fellow creatures, as if he were wise and strong and good?

Ministers that have been the principal instruments of carrying on this glorious revival of religion, and that God has made use of, as it were to bring up his people out of Egypt, as he did of Moses, should take heed that they do not provoke God as Moses did, by assuming too much to themselves, and by their intemperate zeal, to shut them out from seeing the good things that God is going to do for his church in this world. The fruits of Moses' unbelief, which provoked God to shut him out of Canaan, and not to suffer him to partake of those great things God was about to do for Israel on earth, were chiefly these two things:

First, his mingling bitterness with his zeal: he had a great zeal for God, and he could not bear to see the intolerable stiff-neckedness of the people, that they did not acknowledge the work of God, and were not convinced by all his wonders that they had seen: but human passion was mingled with his zeal. Psal. cvi. 32, 33, "They angered him also at the waters of strife; so that it went ill with Moses, for their sakes: because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips." "Hear now, ye rebels," says he, with bitterness of language.

Secondly, he behaved himself, and spake with an assuming air: he assumed too much to himself: *Hear now, ye rebels, must* WE *fetch water out of this rock?* Spiritual pride wrought in Moses at that time: his temptations to it were very great, for he had great discoveries of God, and had been privileged with intimate and sweet communion with him, and God had made him the instrument of great good to his church; and though he was so humble a person,

and, by God's own testimony, meek above all men upon the face of the whole earth, yet his temptations were too strong for him: which surely should make our young ministers, that have of late been highly favored, and have had great success, exceeding careful, and distrustful of themselves. Alas! how far are we from having the strength of holy, meek, aged Moses! The temptation at this day is exceeding great to both those errors that Moses was guilty of: there is great temptation to bitterness and corrupt passion with zeal; for there is so much unreasonable opposition made against this glorious work of God, and so much stiff-neckedness manifested in multitudes of this generation, notwithstanding all the great and wonderful works in which God has passed before them, that it greatly tends to provoke the spirits of such as have the interest of this work at heart, so as to move them to speak unadvisedly with their lips. And there is also great temptation to an assuming behavior in some persons: when a minister is greatly succeeded, from time to time, and so draws the eyes of the multitude upon him, and he sees himself flocked after, and resorted to as an oracle, and people are ready to adore him, and to offer sacrifice to him, as it was with Paul and Barnabas, at Lystra, it is almost impossible for a man to avoid taking upon him the airs of a master, or some extraordinary person; a man had need to have a great stock of humility, and much divine assistance, to resist the temptation. But the greater our dangers are, the more ought to be our watchfulness and prayerfulness, and diffidence of ourselves, lest we bring ourselves into mischief.—Fishermen that have been very successful, and have caught a great many fish, had need to be careful that they do not at length begin to burn incense to their net. And we should take warning by Gideon, who, after God had highly favored and exalted him, and made him the instrument of working a wonderful deliverance for his people, at length made a god of the spoils of his enemies, which became a snare to him and to his house, so as to prove the ruin of his family.

All young ministers in this day of the bringing up the ark of God, should take warning by the example of a young Levite in Israel, viz., Uzza the son of Abinadab. He seemed to have a real concern for the ark of God, and to be zealous and engaged in his mind, on that joyful occasion of bringing up the ark, and God made him an instrument to bring the ark out of its long continued obscurity in Kirjathjearim, and he was succeeded to bring it a considerable way towards mount Zion; but for his want of humility, reverence and circumspection, and assuming to himself, or taking too much upon him, God broke forth upon him, and smote him for his error, so that he never lived to see, and partake of the great joy of his church, on occasion of the carrying up the ark into mount Zion, and the great blessings of heaven upon Israel, that were consequent upon it. Ministers that have been improved to carry on this work have been chiefly of the younger sort, who have doubtless (as Uzza had) a real concern for the ark; and it is evident that they are much animated and engaged in their minds (as he was) in this joyful day of bringing up the ark; and they are afraid what will become of the ark under the conduct of its ministers (that are sometimes in Scripture compared to oxen); they see the ark shakes, and they are afraid these blundering oxen will throw it; and some of them, it is to be feared, have been over officious on this occasion, and have assumed too much to themselves, and have been bold to put forth their hand to take hold of the ark, as though they were the only fit and worthy persons to defend it.

If young ministers had great humility, without a mixture, it would dispose them especially to treat aged ministers with respect and reverence, as their fathers. notwithstanding that a sovereign God may have given them greater assistance

and success, than they have had. 1 Pet. v. 5, "Likewise ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder; yea, all of you, be subject one to another; and be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." Lev. xix. 32, "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man, and fear thy God; I am the Lord."

As spiritual pride disposes persons to assume much to themselves, so it also disposes them to treat others with neglect: on the contrary, pure Christian humility disposes persons to honor all men, agreeable to that rule, 1 Pet. ii. 17.

There has been in some, that I believe are true friends of religion, too much of an appearance of this fruit of spiritual pride, in their treatment of those that they looked upon to be carnal men; and particularly in refusing to enter into any discourse or reasoning with them. Indeed to spend a great deal of time in jangling and warm debates about religion, is not the way to propagate religion, but to hinder it; and some are so dreadfully set against the work, that it is a dismal task to dispute with them, all that one can say is utterly in vain; I have found it so by experience; and to go to enter into disputes about religion, at some times, is quite unseasonable, as particularly in meetings for religious conference, or exercises of worship. But yet we ought to be very careful that we do not refuse to discourse with men, with any appearance of a supercilious neglect, as though we counted them not worthy to be regarded; on the contrary we should condescend to carnal men, as Christ has condescended to us, to bear with our unteachableness and stupidity, and still to follow us with instructions, line upon line, and precept upon precept, saying, come let us reason together; setting light before us, and using all manner of arguments with us, and waiting upon such dull scholars, as it were hoping that we should receive light. We should be ready with meekness and calmness, without hot disputing, to give our reasons, why we think this work is the work of God, to carnal men when they ask us, and not turn them by as not worthy to be talked with; as the apostle directed the primitive Christians to be ready to give a reason of the Christian faith and hope to the enemies of Christianity: 1 Pet. iii. 15, "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear." And we ought not to condemn all reasoning about things of religion under the name of carnal reason. For my part, I desire no better than that those that oppose this work, should come fairly to submit to have the cause betwixt us tried by strict reasoning.

One qualification that the Scripture speaks of once and again, as requisite in a minister is, that he should be διδακτικος, apt to teach, 1 Tim. iii. 2. And the apostle seems to explain what he means by it, in 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25. Or at least there expresses one thing he intends by it, viz., that a minister should be ready, meekly to condescend to, and instruct opposers. *And the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance, to the acknowledging of the truth.*

Secondly. Another thing from whence errors in conduct, that attend such a revival in religion, do arise, is *wrong principles.*

And one erroneous principle, than which scarce any has proved more mischievous to the present glorious work of God, is a notion that it is God's manner, now in these days, to guide his saints, at least some that are more eminent, by inspiration, or immediate revelation, and to make known to them what shall come to pass hereafter, or what it is his will that they should do, by impressions that he by his Spirit makes upon their minds, either with, or without texts of Scripture; whereby something is made known to them, that is not taught in

the Scripture as the words lie in the Bible. By such a notion the devil has a great door open for him; and if once this opinion should come to be fully yielded to, and established in the church of God, Satan would have opportunity thereby to set up himself as the guide and oracle of God's people, and to have his word regarded as their infallible rule, and so to lead them where he would, and to introduce what he pleased, and soon to bring the Bible into neglect and contempt. Late experience in some instances, has shown that the tendency of this notion is to cause persons to esteem the Bible as a book that is in a great measure useless.

This error will defend and support all errors. As long as a person has a notion that he is guided by immediate direction from heaven, it makes him incorrigible and impregnable in all his misconduct: for what signifies it, for poor, blind worms of the dust, to go to argue with a man, and endeavor to convince him and correct him, that is guided by the immediate counsels and commands of the great Jehovah?

This great work of God has been exceedingly hindered by this error; and until we have quite taken this handle out of the devil's hands, the work of God will never go on without great clogs and hinderances. But Satan will always have a vast advantage in his hands against it, and as he has improved it hitherto, so he will do still: and it is evident that the devil knows the vast advantage he has by it, that makes him exceeding loth to let go his hold.

It is strange what a disposition there is in many well-disposed and religious persons, to fall in with and hold fast this notion. It is enough to astonish one that such multiplied, plain instances of the failing of such supposed revelations, in the event, does not open every one's eyes. I have seen so many instances of the failing of such impressions, that would almost furnish a history: I have been acquainted with them when made under all kinds of circumstances, and have seen them fail in the event, when made with such circumstances as have been fairest and brightest, and most promising; as when they have been made upon the minds of such, as there was all reason to think were true saints, yea eminent saints, and at the very time when they have had great divine discoveries, and have been in the high exercise of true communion with God, and made with great strength, and with great sweetness accompanying, and I have had reason to think, with an excellent heavenly frame of spirit, yet continued, and made with texts of Scripture, that seemed to be exceeding apposite, yea many texts following one another, extraordinarily and wonderfully brought to the mind, and with great power and majesty, and the impressions repeated over and over, after prayers to be directed; and yet all has most manifestly come to nothing, to the full conviction of the persons themselves. And God has in so many instances of late in his providence, covered such things with darkness, that one would think it should be enough quite to blank the expectations of such as have been ready to think highly of such things; it seems to be a testimony of God, that he has no design of reviving revelations in his church, and a rebuke from him to the groundless expectations of it.

It seems to me that Scripture, Zech. xiii. 5, is a prophecy concerning ministers of the gospel, in the latter, and glorious day of the Christian church, which is evidently spoken of in this and the foregoing chapters: the words are, *I am no prophet; I am a husbandman: for man taught me to keep cattle from my youth.* The words, I apprehend, are to be interpreted in a spiritual sense; *I am a husbandman:* the work of ministers is very often in the New Testament, compared to the business of the husbandmen, that take care of God's husbandry, to whom he lets out his vineyard, and sends them forth to labor in his field, where

one plants and another waters, one sows and another reaps; so ministers are called laborers in God's harvest. And as it is added, *Man taught me to keep cattle from my youth;* so the work of a minister is very often in Scripture represented by the business of a shepherd or pastor. And whereas it is said, *I am no prophet; but man taught me from my youth;* it is as much as to say, I do not pretend to have received my skill, whereby I am fitted for the business of a pastor or shepherd in the church of God, by immediate inspiration, but by education, by being trained up to the business by human learning, and instructions I have received from my youth or childhood, by ordinary means.

And why cannot we be contented with the divine oracles, that holy, pure word of God, that we have in such abundance, and such clearness, now since the canon of Scripture is completed? Why should we desire to have any thing added to them by impulses from above? Why should not we rest in that standing rule that God has given to his church, which the apostle teaches us is surer than a voice from heaven? And why should we desire to make the Scripture speak more to us than it does? Or why should any desire any higher kind of intercourse with heaven, than that which is by having the Holy Spirit given in his sanctifying influences, infusing and exciting grace and holiness, love and joy, which is the highest kind of intercourse that the saints and angels in heaven have with God, and the chief excellency of the glorified man Christ Jesus?

Some that follow impulses and impressions go away with a notion that they do no other than follow the guidance of God's word, and make the Scripture their rule, because the impression is made with a text of Scripture, that comes to their mind, though they take that text as it is impressed on their minds, and improve it as a new revelation, to all intents and purposes, or as the revelation of a particular thing, that is now newly made, while the text in itself, as it is in the Bible, implies no such thing, and they themselves do not suppose that any such revelation was contained in it before. As for instance, suppose that text should come into a person's mind with strong impression, Acts ix. 6: "Arise and go into the city; and it shall be told thee what thou must do." And he should interpret it as an immediate signification of the will of God, that he should now, forthwith go to such a neighbor town, and as a revelation of that future event, viz., that there he should meet with a further discovery of his duty. If such things as these are revealed by the impression of these words, it is to all intents, a new revelation, not the less because certain words of Scripture are made use of in the case: here are propositions or truths entirely new, that are supposed now to be revealed, that those words do not contain in themselves, and that till now there was no revelation of anywhere to be found in heaven or earth. These propositions, that it is God's mind and will that such a person by name, should arise at such a time, and go from such a place to such a place, and that there he should meet with discoveries, are entirely new propositions, wholly different from the propositions contained in that text of Scripture, no more contained, or consequentially implied in the words themselves, without a new revelation, than it is implied that he should arise and go to any other place, or that any other person should arise and go to that place. The propositions supposed to be now revealed, are as really different from those contained in that Scripture, as they are from the propositions contained in that text, Gen. v. 6: "And Seth lived a hundred and five years, and begat Enos."

This is quite a different thing from the Spirit's enlightening the mind to understand the precepts or propositions of the word of God, and know what is contained and revealed in them, and what consequences may justly be drawn

from them, and to see how they are applicable to our case and circumstances; which is done without any new revelation, only by enabling the mind to understand and apply a revelation already made.

Those texts of Scripture that speak of the children of God as *led by the Spirit*, have been, by some, brought to defend a being guided by such impulses; as particularly, those Rom. viii. 14, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." And Gal. v. 18, "But if ye are led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law." But these texts themselves confute them that bring them: for it is evident that the leading of the Spirit that the apostle speaks of is a gracious leading, or what is peculiar to the children of God, and that natural men cannot have; for he speaks of it as a sure evidence of their being the sons of God, and not under the law: but a leading or directing a person, by immediately revealing to him where he should go, or what shall hereafter come to pass, or what shall be the future consequence of his doing thus or thus, if there be any such thing in these days, is not of the nature of the gracious leading of the Spirit of God, that is peculiar to God's children; it is no more than a common gift; there is nothing in it but what natural men are capable of, and many of them have had in the days of inspiration: a man may have ten thousand such revelations and directions from the Spirit of God, and yet not have a jot of grace in his heart: it is no more than the gift of prophecy, which immediately reveals what will be, or should be hereafter; but this is but a common gift, as the apostle expressly shows, 1 Cor. xiii. 2, 8. If a person has any thing revealed to him from God, or is directed to any thing, by a voice from heaven, or a whisper, or words immediately suggested and put into his mind, there is nothing of the nature of grace, merely in this; it is of the nature of a common influence of the Spirit, and is but dross and dung, in comparison of the excellency of that gracious leading of the Spirit that the saints have. Such a way of being directed where one shall go, and what he shall do, is no more than what Balaam had from God, who from time to time revealed to him what he should do, and when he had done one thing, then directed him what he should do next; so that he was in this sense led by the Spirit, for a considerable time. There is a more excellent way that the Spirit of God leads the sons of God, that natural men cannot have, and that is by inclining them to do the will of God, and go in the shining path of truth and Christian holiness, from a holy, heavenly disposition, which the Spirit of God gives them, and enlivens in them, which inclines them, and leads them to those things that are excellent, and agreeable to God's mind, whereby they *are transformed, by the renewing of their minds, and prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God*, as in Rom. xii. 2. And so the Spirit of God does in a gracious manner teach the saints their duty; and teaches them in a higher manner than ever Balaam, or Saul, or Judas were taught, or any natural man is capable of while such. The Spirit of God enlightens them with respect to their duty, by making their eye single and pure, whereby the whole body is full of light. The sanctifying influences of the Spirit of God rectifies the taste of the soul, whereby it savors those things that are of God, and naturally relishes and delights in those things that are holy and agreeable to God's mind, and like one of a distinguishing taste, chooses those things that are good and wholesome, and rejects those things that are evil; for the sanctified ear tries words, and the sanctified heart tries actions, as the mouth tastes meat. And thus the Spirit of God leads and guides the meek in his way, agreeably to his promises; he enables them to understand the commands and counsels of his word, and rightly to apply them. Christ blames the Pharisees that they had not this holy distinguishing taste, to

discern and distinguish what was right and wrong. Luke xii. 57, "Yea, and why, even of your own selves, judge ye not what is right?"

The leading of the Spirit which God gives his children, which is peculiar to them, is that teaching them his statutes, and causing them to understand the way of his precepts, which the Psalmist so very often prays for, especially in the 119th Psalm; and not in giving of them *new statutes* and *new precepts:* he graciously gives them eyes to see, and ears to hear, and hearts to understand; he causes them to understand the fear of the Lord, and so brings the blind by a way they knew not, and leads them in paths that they had not known, and makes darkness light before them, and crooked things straight.

So the assistance of the Spirit in praying and preaching seems by some to have been greatly misunderstood, and they have sought after a miraculous assistance of inspiration, by immediate suggesting of words to them, by such gifts and influences of the Spirit, in praying and teaching, as the apostle speaks of, 1 Cor. xiv. 14, 26 (which many natural men had in those days), instead of a gracious holy assistance of the Spirit of God, which is the far more excellent way; as 1 Cor. xii. 31, and xiii. 1. The gracious, and most excellent kind of assistance of the Spirit of God in praying and preaching, is not by immediate suggesting of words to the apprehension, which may be with a cold dead heart, but by warming the heart, and filling it with a great sense of those things that are to be spoken of, and with holy affections, that that sense and those affections may suggest words. Thus indeed the Spirit of God may be said, indirectly and mediately to suggest words to us, to indite our petitions for us, and to teach the preacher what to say; he fills the heart, and that fills the mouth; as we know that when men are greatly affected in any matter, and their hearts are very full, it fills them with matter for speech, and makes them eloquent upon that subject; and much more have spiritual affections this tendency, for many reasons that might be given. When a person is in a holy and lively frame in secret prayer, it will wonderfully supply him with matter, and with expressions, as every true Christian knows; and so it will fill his mouth in Christian conversation, and it has the like tendency to enable a person in public prayer and preaching. And if he has these holy influences of the Spirit on his heart in a high degree, nothing in the world will have so great a tendency to make both the matter and manner of his public performances excellent and profitable. But since there is no immediate suggesting of words from the Spirit of God to be expected or desired, they who neglect and despise study and premeditation, in order to a preparation for the pulpit, in such an expectation, are guilty of presumption; though doubtless it may be lawful for some persons, in some cases (and they may be called to it), to preach with very little study; and the Spirit of God, by the heavenly frame of heart that he gives them, may enable them to do it to excellent purpose.

Besides this most excellent way of the Spirit of God, his assisting ministers in public performances, which (considered as the preacher's privilege) far excels inspiration, there is a common assistance which natural men may have in these days, and which the godly may have intermingled with a gracious assistance, which is also very different from inspiration, and that is his assisting natural principles; as his assisting the natural apprehension, reason, memory, conscience, and natural affection.

But to return to the head of impressions and immediate revelations; many lay themselves open to a delusion by expecting direction from heaven in this way, and waiting for it: in such a case it is easy for persons to imagine that they have it. They are perhaps at a loss concerning something, undetermined

what they shall do, or what course they should take in some affair, and they pray to God to direct them, and make known to them his mind and will; and then instead of expecting to be directed, by being assisted in consideration of the rules of God's word, and their circumstances, and God's providence, and enabled to look on things in a true light, and justly to weigh them, they are waiting for some secret immediate influence on their minds, unaccountably swaying their minds, and turning their thoughts or inclinations that way that God would have them go, and are observing their own minds, to see what arises there, whether some texts of Scripture do not come into the mind, or whether some ideas or inward motions and dispositions do not arise in something of an unaccountable manner, that they may call a divine direction. Hereby they are exposed to two things.

First, they lay themselves open to the devil, and give him a fair opportunity to lead them where he pleases; for they stand ready to follow the first extraordinary impulse that they shall have, groundlessly concluding it is from God.

And, *secondly*, they are greatly exposed to be deceived by their own imaginations: for such an expectation awakens and quickens the imagination; and that oftentimes is called an uncommon impression, that is no such thing; and they ascribe that to the agency of some invisible being, that is owing only to themselves.

Again, another way, that many have been deceived, is, by drawing false conclusions from true premises. Many true and eminent saints have been led into mistakes and snares, by arguing too much from that, that they have prayed in faith; and that oftentimes when the premises are true, they have indeed been greatly assisted in prayer for such a particular mercy, and have had the true spirit of prayer in exercise in their asking it of God; but they have concluded more from these premises than is a just consequence from them: that they have thus prayed is a sure sign that their prayer is accepted and heard, and that God will give a gracious answer, according to his own wisdom, and that the particular thing that was asked shall be given, or that which is equivalent; this is a just consequence from it; but it is not inferred by any new revelation now made, but by the revelation that is made in God's word, the promises made to the prayer of faith, in the holy Scriptures: but that God will answer them in that individual thing that they ask, if it be not a thing promised in God's word, or they do not certainly know that it is that which will be most for the good of God's church, and the advancement of Christ's kingdom and glory, nor whether it will be best for them, is more than can be justly concluded from it. If God remarkably meets with one of his children while he is praying for a particular mercy of great importance, for himself, or some other person, or any society of men, and does by the influences of his Spirit greatly humble him, and empty him of himself in his prayer, and manifests himself remarkably in his excellency, sovereignty, and his all-sufficient power and grace in Jesus Christ, and does in a remarkable manner enable the person to come to him for that mercy, poor in spirit, and with humble resignation to God, and with a great degree of faith in the divine sufficiency, and the sufficiency of Christ's mediation, that person has indeed a great deal the more reason to hope that God will grant that mercy, than otherwise he would have; the greater probability is justly inferred from that, agreeably to the promises of the holy Scripture, that the prayer is accepted and heard; and it is much more probable that a prayer that is heard will be returned with the particular mercy that is asked, than one that is not heard. And there is no reason at all to doubt, but that God does

sometimes especially enable to the exercises of faith, when the minds of his saints are engaged in thoughts of, and prayer for some particular blessing they greatly desire; i. e., God is pleased especially to give them a believing frame, a sense of his fulness, and a spirit of humble dependence on him, at such times as when they are thinking of, and praying for that mercy, more than for other mercies; he gives them a particular sense of his ability to do that thing, and of the sufficiency of his power to overcome such and such obstacles, and the sufficiency of his mercy, and of the blood of Christ for the removal of the guilt that is in the way of the bestowment of such a mercy, in particular. When this is the case, it makes the probability still much greater, that God intends to bestow the particular mercy sought, in his own time, and his own way.—But here is nothing of the nature of a revelation in the case, but only a drawing rational conclusions from the particular manner and circumstances of the ordinary gracious influences of God's Spirit. And as God is pleased sometimes to give his saints particular exercises of faith in his sufficiency, with regard to particular mercies they seek, so he is sometimes pleased to make use of his word in order to it, and helps the actings of faith with respect to such a mercy, by texts of Scripture that do especially exhibit the sufficiency of God's power or mercy, in such a like case, or speak of such a manner of the exercise of God's strength and grace. The strengthening of their faith in God's sufficiency in this case, is therefore a just improvement of such Scriptures; it is no more than what those Scriptures, as they stand in the Bible, do hold forth just cause for. But to take them as new whispers or revelations from heaven, is not making a just improvement of them. If persons have thus a spirit of prayer remarkably given them, concerning a particular mercy, from time to time, so as evidently to be assisted to act faith in God, in that particular, in a very distinguishing manner, the argument, in some cases, may be very strong that God does design to grant that mercy, not from any revelation now made of it, but from such a kind and manner of the ordinary influence of his Spirit, with respect to that thing.

But here a great deal of caution and circumspection must be used in drawing inferences of this nature: there are many ways persons may be misled and deluded. The ground on which some expect that they shall receive the thing they have asked for, is rather a strong imagination, than any true humble faith in the divine sufficiency. They have a strong persuasion that the thing asked shall be granted (which they can give no reason for), without any remarkable discovery of that glory and fulness of God and Christ, that is the ground of faith. And sometimes the confidence that persons have that their prayers shall be answered, is only a self-righteous confidence, and no true faith: they have a high conceit of themselves as eminent saints, and special favorites of God, and have also a high conceit of the prayers they have made, because they were much enlarged and affected in them; and hence they are positive in it that the thing will come to pass. And sometimes when once they have conceived such a notion, they grow stronger and stronger in it; and this they think is from an immediate divine hand upon their minds to strengthen their confidence; whereas it is only by their dwelling in their minds on their own excellency, and high experiences, and great assistances, whereby they look brighter and brighter in their own eyes. Hence it is sound observation and experience, that nothing in the world exposes so much to enthusiasm as spiritual pride and self-righteousness.

In order to drawing a just inference from the supposed assistance we have had in prayer for a particular mercy, and judging of the probability of the bestowment of that individual mercy, many things must be considered. We must

consider the importance of the mercy sought, and the principle whence we so earnestly desire it; how far it is good, and agreeable to the mind and will of God; the degree of love to God that we exercise in our prayer; the degree of discovery that is made of the divine sufficiency, and the degree in which our assistance is manifestly distinguishing with respect to that mercy. And there is nothing of greater importance in the argument than the degree of humility, poverty of spirit, self-emptiness and resignation to the holy will of God, which God gives us the exercise of in our seeking that mercy: praying for a particular mercy with much of these things, I have often seen blessed with a remarkable bestowment of the particular thing asked for.

From what has been said, we may see which way God may, only by the ordinary gracious influences of his Spirit, sometimes give his saints special reason to hope for the bestowment of a particular mercy they desire and have prayed for, and which we may suppose he oftentimes gives eminent saints, that have great degrees of humility, and much communion with God. And here, I humbly conceive, some eminent servants of Jesus Christ that have appeared in the church of God, that we read of in ecclesiastical story, have been led into a mistake; and through want of distinguishing such things as these from immediate revelations, have thought that God has favored them, in some instances, with the same kind of divine influences that the apostles and prophets had of old.

Another erroneous principle that some have embraced, that has been a source of many errors in their conduct, is, that persons ought always to do whatsoever the Spirit of God (though but indirectly) inclines them to. Indeed the Spirit of God in itself is infinitely perfect, and all his immediate actings, simply considered, are perfect, and there can be nothing wrong in them; and therefore all that the Spirit of God inclines us to directly and immediately, without the intervention of any other cause that shall pervert and misimprove what is from the Spirit of God, ought to be done; but there may be many things that we may be disposed to do, which disposition may indirectly be from the Spirit of God, that we ought not to do: the disposition in general may be good, and be from the Spirit of God, but the particular determination of that disposition, as to particular actions, objects and circumstances, may be ill, and not from the Spirit of God, but may be from the intervention or interposition of some infirmity, blindness, inadvertence, deceit or corruption of ours; so that although the disposition in general ought to be allowed and promoted, and all those actings of it that are simply from God's Spirit, yet the particular ill direction or determination of that disposition, which is from some other cause, ought not to be followed.

As for instance, the Spirit of God may cause a person to have a dear love to another, and so a great desire of, and delight in his comfort, ease and pleasure: this disposition in general is good, and ought to be followed; but yet through the intervention of indiscretion, or some other bad cause, it may be ill directed, and have a bad determination, as to particular acts; and the person indirectly, through that real love that he has to his neighbor, may kill him with kindness; he may do that out of sincere good will to him, that may tend to ruin him. A good disposition may, through some inadvertence or delusion, strongly incline a person to that, which if he saw all things as they are, would be most contrary to that disposition. The true loyalty of a general, and his zeal for the honor of his prince, may exceedingly animate him in war; but yet this that is a good disposition, through indiscretion and mistake, may push him forward to those things that give the enemy great advantage, and may expose him and his army to ruin, and may tend to the ruin of his master's interest.

The apostle does evidently suppose that the Spirit of God in his extraordinary, immediate and miraculous influences on men's minds, may in some respect excite inclinations in men, that if gratified, would tend to confusion, and therefore must sometimes be restrained, and in their exercise, must be under the government of discretion. 1 Cor. xiv. 31, 32, 33, "For ye may all prophesy, one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets; for God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints." Here by *the spirits of the prophets*, according to the known phraseology of the apostle, is meant the Spirit of God acting in the prophets, according to those special gifts, with which each one was endowed. And here it is plainly implied that the Spirit of God thus operating in them, may be an occasion of their having, sometimes, an inclination to do that, in the exercise of those gifts, which it was not proper, decent or profitable that they should, and that therefore the inclination, though indirectly from the Spirit of God, should be restrained, and that it ought to be subject to the discretion of the prophets, as to the particular time and circumstance of its exercise.

I can make no doubt but that it is possible for a minister to have given him by the Spirit of God, such a sense of the importance of eternal things, and of the misery of mankind, that are so many of them exposed to eternal destruction, together with such a love to souls, that he might find in himself a disposition to spend all his time, day and night, in warning, exhorting and calling upon men, and so that he must be obliged as it were to do violence to himself ever to refrain, so as to give himself any opportunity to eat, drink or sleep. And so I believe there may be a disposition in like manner, indirectly excited in lay persons, through the intervention of their infirmity, to do what belongs to ministers only; yea, to do those things that would not become either ministers or people. Through the influence of the Spirit of God, together with want of discretion, and some remaining corruption, women and children might feel themselves inclined to break forth and scream aloud, to great congregations, warning and exhorting the whole multitude, and to go forth and halloo and scream in the streets, or to leave the families they belong to, and go from house to house, earnestly exhorting others: but yet it would by no means follow that it was their duty to do these things, or that they would not have a tendency to do ten times as much hurt as good.

Another wrong principle from whence have arisen errors in conduct, is, that whatsoever is found to be of present and immediate benefit, may and ought to be practised, without looking forward to future consequences. Some persons seem to think that it sufficiently justifies any thing that they say or do, that it is found to be for their present edification, and the edification of those that are with them; it assists and promotes their present affection, and therefore they think they should not concern themselves about future consequences, but leave them with God. Indeed in things that are in themselves our duty, being required by moral rules, or absolute positive commands of God, they must be done, and future consequences must be left with God; our election and discretion takes no place here: but in other things we are to be governed by discretion, and must not only look at the present good, but our view must be extensive, and we must look at the consequences of things. It is the duty of ministers especially to exercise this discretion: in things wherein they are not determined by an absolute rule, and that are not enjoined them by a wisdom superior to their own, Christ has left them to their own discretion, with that general rule, that they should exercise the utmost wisdom they can obtain, in pursuing that, which

upon the best view of the consequences of things they can get, will tend most to the advancement of his kingdom. This is implied in those words of Christ to his disciples, when he sent them forth to preach the gospel, Matt. x. 16: "Be ye wise as serpents." The Scripture always represents the work of a gospel minister by those employments that do especially require a wise foresight of, and provision for, future events and consequences. So it is compared to the business of a steward, that is a business that in an eminent manner requires forecast, and a wise laying in of provision, for the supply of the needs of the family, according to its future necessities; and a good minister is called a wise steward: so it is compared to the business of a husbandman, that almost wholly consists in those things that are done with a view to the future fruits and consequences of his labor: the husbandman's discretion and forecast is eloquently set forth in Isa. xxviii. 24, 25, 26: "Doth the ploughman plough all day to sow? Doth he open and break the clods of his ground? When he hath made plain the face thereof, doth he not cast abroad the fitches, and scatter the cuminin, and cast in the principal wheat, and the appointed barley, and the rye, in their place? For his God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him." So the work of the ministry is compared to that of a wise builder or architect, who has a long reach, and comprehensive view; and for whom it is necessary, that when he begins a building, he should have at once a view of the whole frame, and all the future parts of the structure, even to the pinnacle, that all may fitly be framed together. So also it is compared to the business of a trader or merchant, who is to gain by trading with the money that he begins with: this also is a business that exceedingly requires forecast, and without it, is never like to be followed with any success, for any long time: so it is represented by the business of a fisherman, which depends on craft and subtilty: it is also compared to the business of a soldier that goes to war, which is a business that perhaps, above any other secular business, requires great foresight, and a wise provision for future events and consequences.

And particularly ministers ought not to be careless how much they discompose and ruffle the minds of those that they esteem natural men, or how great an uproar they raise in the carnal world, and so lay blocks in the way of the propagation of religion. This certainly is not to follow the example of that zealous Apostle Paul, who, though he would not depart from his enjoined duty to please carnal men, yet wherein he might with a good conscience, did exceedingly lay out himself to please them, and if possible to avoid raising in the multitude, prejudices, oppositions and tumults against the gospel; and looked upon it that it was of great consequence that it should be, if possible, avoided. 1 Cor. x. 32, 33, "Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: even as I please all men, in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved." Yea, he declares that he laid himself out so much for this, that he made himself a kind of a servant to all sorts of men, conforming to their customs and various humors, in every thing wherein he might, even in things that were very burdensome to him, that he might not frighten men away from Christianity, and cause them to stand as it were braced and armed against it, but on the contrary, if possible, might with condescension and friendship win and draw them to it; as you may see, 1 Cor. ix. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23. And agreeably hereto, are the directions he gives to others, both ministers and people: so he directs the Christian *Romans, not to please themselves, but every one please his neighbor, for his good, to edification*, Rom. xv. 1, 2. *And to follow after the things that make for peace*, chap. xiv. 19. And he presses it in terms exceeding strong, Rom. xii. 18: "If it

be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." And he directs ministers to endeavor if possible to gain opposers by a meek condescending treatment, avoiding all appearance of strife or fierceness, 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25, 26. To the like purpose the same apostle directs Christians to *walk in wisdom, towards them that are without*, Eph. iv. 5. And to avoid giving offence to others, if we can, *that our good may not be evil spoken of*, Rom. xiv. 16. So that it is evident that the great and most zealous and most successful propagator of vital religion that ever was, looked upon it to be of great consequence to endeavor, as much as possible, by all the methods of lawful meekness and gentleness, to avoid raising the prejudice and opposition of the world against religion. When we have done our utmost there will be opposition enough against vital religion, against which the carnal mind of man has such an enmity; we should not, therefore, needlessly increase and raise that enmity, as in the apostle's days, though he took so much pains to please men, yet because he was faithful and thorough in his work, persecution almost everywhere was raised against him.

A fisherman is careful not needlessly to ruffle and disturb the water, lest he should drive the fish away from his net; but he will rather endeavor if possible to draw them into it. Such a fisherman was the apostle. 2. Cor. xii. 15, 16, "And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved. But be it so, I did not burden you, nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you with guile."

The necessity of suffering persecution, in order to being a true Christian, has undoubtedly by some been carried to an extreme, and the doctrine has been abused. It has been looked upon necessary to uphold a man's credit amongst others as a Christian, that he should be persecuted. I have heard it made an objection against the sincerity of particular persons, that they were no more hated and reproached. And the manner of glorying in persecution, or the cross of Christ, has in some been very wrong, so as has had too much of an appearance of lifting up themselves in it, that they were very much hated and reviled, more than most, as an evidence of their excelling others, in being good soldiers of Jesus Christ. Such an improvement of the doctrine of the enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, and of the necessity of persecution, becoming credible and customary, has a direct tendency to cause those that would be accounted true Christians, to behave themselves so towards those that are not well affected to religion, as to provoke their hatred, or at least to be but little careful to avoid it, and not very studiously and earnestly to strive (after the apostle's example and precepts), to please them to their edification, and by meekness and gentleness to win them, and by all possible means to live peaceably with them.

I believe that saying of our Saviour, *I came not to send peace on earth, but division*, has been abused; as though when we see great strife and division arise about religion, and violent heats of spirit against the truly pious, and a loud clamor and uproar against the work of God, it was to be rejoiced in, because it is that which Christ came to send. It has almost been laid down as a maxim by some, that the more division and strife, the better sign; which naturally leads persons to seek it and provoke it, or leads them to, and encourages them in, such a manner of behavior, such a roughness and sharpness, or such an affected neglect, as has a natural tendency to raise prejudice and opposition; instead of striving, as the apostle did to his utmost, by all meekness, gentleness, and benevolence of behavior, to prevent or assuage it. Christ came to send a sword on earth, and to cause division, no otherwise than he came to send damnation; for Christ that is set for the glorious restoration of some, is set for the

fall of others, and to be a stone of stumbling and rock of offence to them, and an occasion of their vastly more aggravated and terrible damnation; and this is always the consequence of a great outpouring of the Spirit and revival of vital religion, it is the means of the salvation of some, and the more aggravated damnation of others. But certainly this is no just argument that men's exposedness to damnation is not to be lamented, or that we should not exert ourselves to our utmost, in all the methods that we can devise, that others might be saved, and to avoid all such behavior towards them as tends to lead them down to hell.

I know there is naturally a great enmity in the heart of man against vital religion; and I believe there would have been a great deal of opposition against this glorious work of God in New England if the subjects and promoters of it had behaved themselves never so agreeably to Christian rules; and I believe if this work goes on and spreads much in the world, so as to begin to shake kingdoms and nations, it will dreadfully stir up the rage of earth and hell, and will put the world into the greatest uproar that ever it was in since it stood; I believe Satan's dying struggles will be the most violent: but yet I believe a great deal might be done to restrain this opposition, by a good conformity to that of the Apostle James, Jam. iii. 13: "Who is a wise man, and endued with knowledge? Let him show out of a good conversation, his works, with meekness of wisdom." And I also believe that if the rules of Christian charity, meekness, gentleness, and prudence had been duly observed by the generality of the zealous promoters of this work, it would have made three times the progress that it has; i. e., if it had pleased God in such a case to give a blessing to means in proportion as he has done.

Under this head of carelessness of the future consequences of things, it may be proper to say something of introducing things new and strange, and that have a tendency by their novelty to shock and surprise people. Nothing can be more evident from the New Testament, than that such things ought to be done with great caution and moderation, to avoid the offence that may be thereby given, and the prejudices that might be raised, to clog and hinder the progress of religion: yea, that it ought to be thus in things that are in themselves good and excellent, and of great weight, provided they are not things that are of the nature of absolute duty, which, though they may appear to be innovations, yet cannot be neglected without immorality or disobedience to the commands of God. What great caution and moderation did the apostles use in introducing things that were new, and abolishing things that were old in their day! How gradually were the ceremonial performances of the law of Moses removed and abolished among the Christian Jews! And how long did even the Apostle Paul himself conform to those ceremonies which he calls weak and beggarly elements! Yea, even to the rite of circumcision (Acts xvi. 3), that he speaks so much in his epistles of the worthlessness of, that he might not prejudice the Jews against Christianity! So it seems to have been very gradually that the Jewish Sabbath was abolished, and the Christian Sabbath introduced, for the same reason. And the apostles avoided teaching the Christians in those early days, at least for a great while, some high and excellent divine truths, because they could not bear them yet, 1 Cor. iii. 11, 2, Heb. v. 11, to the end. Thus strictly did the apostles observe the rule that their blessed master gave them, of not putting new wine into old bottles, lest they should burst the bottles, and lose the wine.

And how did Christ himself, while on earth, forbear so plainly to teach his disciples the great doctrines of Christianity, concerning his satisfaction, and the

nature and manner of a sinner's justification and reconciliation with God, and the particular benefits of his death, resurrection and ascension, because in that infant state the disciples were then in, their minds were not prepared for such instructions; and therefore the more clear and full revelation of these things was reserved for the time when their minds should be further enlightened and strengthened by the outpouring of the Spirit after his ascension. John xvi. 12, 13, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now: howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." And Mark iv. 33, "And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to bear it." These things might be enough to convince any one, that does not think himself wiser than Christ and his apostles, that great prudence and caution should be used in introducing things into the church of God, that are very uncommon, though in themselves they may be very excellent, lest by our rashness and imprudent haste we hinder religion much more than we help it.

Persons that are influenced by an indiscreet zeal are always in too much haste; they are impatient of delays, and therefore are for jumping to the uppermost step first, before they have taken the preceding steps; whereby they expose themselves to fall and break their bones: it is a thing very taking with them to see the building rise very high, and all their endeavor and strength is employed in advancing the building in height, without taking care withal proportionably to enlarge the bottom; whereby the whole is in danger of coming to the ground; or they are for putting on the cupola and pinnacle before they are come to it, or before the lower parts of the building are done; which tends at once to put a stop to the building, and hinder its ever being a complete structure. Many that are thus imprudent and hasty with their zeal, have a real eager appetite for that which is good; but are like children, that are impatient to wait for the fruit until the proper season of it, and therefore snatch it before it is ripe: oftentimes in their haste they overshoot their mark, and frustrate their own end; they put that which they would obtain further out of reach than it was before, and establish and confirm that which they would remove. Things must have time to ripen: the prudent husbandman waits until he has received the former and the latter rain, and till the harvest is ripe, before he reaps. We are now just as it were beginning to recover out of a dreadful disease that we have been long under; and to feed a man recovering from a fever with strong meat at once, is the ready way to kill him. The reformation from Popery was much hindered by this hasty zeal: many were for immediately rectifying all disorders by force, which were condemned by Luther, and were a great trouble to him. See Sleiden's History of the Reformation, page 52, &c., and Book V. throughout. It is a vain prejudice that some have lately imbibed against such rules of prudence and moderation: they will be forced to come to them at last; they will find themselves that they are not able to maintain their cause without them; and if they will not hearken before, experience will convince them at last, when it will be too late for them to rectify their mistake.

Another error, that is of the nature of an erroneous principle, that some have gone upon, is a wrong notion that they have of an attestation of divine Providence to persons or things. We go too far when we look upon the success that God gives to some persons, in making them the instruments of doing much good, as a testimony of God's approbation of those persons and all the courses they take. It is a main argument that has been made use of to defend the conduct of some of those ministers, that have been blamed as imprudent and irregular, that God has smiled upon them and blessed them, and given them great success,

and that however men charge them as guilty of many wrong things, yet it is evident that God is with them, and then who can be against them? And probably some of those ministers themselves, by this very means, have had their ears stopped against all that has been said to convince them of their misconduct. But there are innumerable ways that persons may be misled, in forming a judgment of the mind and will of God, from the events of Providence. If a person's success be a reward of something that God sees in him, that he approves of, yet it is no argument that he approves of every thing in him. Who can tell how far the divine grace may go in greatly rewarding some small good that he sees in a person, a good meaning, something good in his disposition, while he at the same time, in sovereign mercy, hides his eyes from a great deal that is bad, that it is his pleasure to forgive, and not to mark against the person, though in itself it be very ill? God has not told us after what manner he will proceed in this matter, and we go upon most uncertain grounds when we undertake to determine. It is an exceeding difficult thing to know how far love or hatred is exercised towards persons or actions, by all that is before us. God was pleased in his sovereignty to give such success to Jacob in that, which from beginning to end was a deceitful, lying contrivance and proceeding of his, that in that way he obtained that blessing that was worth infinitely more than the fatness of the earth, and the dew of heaven, that was given to Esau, in his blessing, yea, worth more than all that the world can afford. God was for a while with Judas, so that he, by God's power accompanying him, wrought miracles and cast out devils; but this could not justly be interpreted as God's approbation of his person, or his thievery, that he lived in at the same time.

The dispensations and events of Providence, with their reasons, are too little understood by us, to be improved by us as our rule, instead of God's word; *God has his way in the sea, and his path in the mighty waters, and his footsteps are not known, and he gives us no account of any of his matters;* and therefore we cannot safely take the events of his providence as a revelation of his mind concerning a person's conduct and behavior; we have no warrant so to do; God has never appointed those things, but something else to be our rule; we have but one rule to go by, and that is his holy word, and when we join any thing else with it as having the force of a rule, we are guilty of that which is strictly forbidden, Deut. iv. 2, Prov. xxx. 6, and Rev. xxii. 18. They who make what they imagine is pointed forth to them in Providence, their rule of behavior, do err, as well as those that follow impulses and impressions: we should put nothing in the room of the word of God. It is to be feared that some have been greatly confirmed and emboldened by the great success that God has given them, in some things that have really been contrary to the rules of God's holy word. If it has been so, they have been guilty of presumption, and abusing God's kindness to them, and the great honor he has put upon them; they have seen that God was with them, and made them victorious in their preaching; and this it is to be feared has been abused by some to a degree of self-confidence; it has much taken off all jealousy of themselves; they have been bold therefore to go great lengths, in a presumption that God was with them, and would defend them, and finally baffle all that found fault with them.

Indeed there is a voice of God in his providence, that may be interpreted and well understood by the rule of his word; and Providence may, to our dark minds and weak faith, confirm the word of God, as it fulfils it. But to improve divine Providence thus, is quite a different thing from making a rule of Providence. There is a good use may be made of the events of Providence, of our own observation and experience, and human histories, and the opinion of the

fathers and other eminent men; but finally all must be brought to *one rule*, viz., the word of God, and that must be regarded as our *only rule*.

Nor do I think that they go upon sure ground, that conclude that they have not been in an error in their conduct, because that at the time of their doing a thing, for which they have been blamed and reproached by others, they were favored with special comforts of God's Spirit. God's bestowing special spiritual mercies on a person at such a time, is no sign that he approves of every thing that he sees in him at that time. David had very much of the presence of God while he lived in polygamy: and Solomon had some very high favors, and peculiar smiles of heaven, and particularly at the dedication of the temple, while he greatly multiplied wives to himself, and horses, and silver and gold; all contrary to the most express command of God to the king, in the law of Moses, Deut. xvii. 16, 17. We cannot tell how far God may hide his eyes from beholding iniquity in Jacob, and seeing perverseness in Israel. We cannot tell what are the reasons of God's actions any further than he interprets for himself. God sometimes gave some of the primitive Christians the extraordinary influence of his Spirit, when they were out of the way of their duty; and continued it, while they were abusing it; as is plainly implied, 1 Cor. xiv. 31, 32, 33.

Yea, if a person has done a thing for which he is reproached, and that reproach be an occasion of his feeling sweet exercises of grace in his soul, and that from time to time, I do not think that is a certain evidence that God approves of the thing he is blamed for. For undoubtedly a mistake may be the occasion of stirring up the exercise of grace, in a man that has grace. If a person, through mistake, thinks he has received some particular great mercy, that mistake may be the occasion of stirring up the sweet exercises of love to God, and true thankfulness and joy in God. As for instance, if one that is full of love to God should hear credible things, concerning a remarkable deliverance of a child, or other dear friend, or some glorious thing done for the city of God, no wonder if, on such an occasion, the sweet actings of love to God, and delight in God, should be excited, though indeed afterwards it should prove a false report that he heard. So if one that loves God, is much maligned and reproached for doing that which he thinks God required and approves, no wonder that it is sweet to such a one to think that God is his friend though men are his enemies; no wonder at all, that this is an occasion of his, as it were, leaving the world, and sweetly betaking himself to God, as his sure friend, and finding sweet complacence in God; though he be indeed in a mistake, concerning that which he thought was agreeable to God's will.

As I have before shown that the exercise of a truly good affection may be the occasion of error, and may indirectly incline a person to do that which is wrong; so, on the other hand, error, or a doing that which is wrong, may be an occasion of the exercise of a truly good affection. The reason of it is this, that however all exercises of grace be from the Spirit of God, yet the Spirit of God dwells and acts in the hearts of the saints, in some measure after the manner of a vital, natural principle, a principle of new nature in them; whose exercises are excited by means, in some measure as other natural principles are. Though grace be not in the saints, as a *mere natural principle*, but as a sovereign agent, and so its exercises are not *tied to means*, by an immutable law of nature, as in mere natural principles; yet God has so constituted that grace should dwell so in the hearts of the saints, that its exercises should have some degree of connection with means, after the manner of a principle of nature.

Another erroneous principle that there has been something of, and that has been an occasion of some mischief and confusion, is that external order in mat-

ters of religion, and use of the means of grace, is but little to be regarded; it is spoken lightly of, under the names of ceremonies and dead forms, &c.; and is probably the more despised by some because their opposers insist so much upon it, and because they are so continually hearing from them the cry of *disorder and confusion*.—It is objected against the importance of external order, that God does not look at the outward form, he looks at the heart: but that is a weak argument against its importance, that true godliness does not consist in it; for it may be equally made use of against all the outward means of grace whatsoever.—True godliness does not consist in ink and paper, but yet that would be a foolish objection against the importance of ink and paper in religion, when without it we could not have the word of God. If any external means are at all needful, any outward actions of a public nature, or wherein God's people are jointly concerned in public society, without doubt external order is needful: the management of an external affair that is public, or wherein a multitude is concerned without order, is in every thing found impossible. Without order there can be no general direction of a multitude to any particular designed end, their purposes will cross one another, and they will not help but hinder one another. A multitude cannot act in union one with another without order; confusion separates and divides them, so that there can be no concert or agreement. If a multitude would help one another in an affair, they must unite themselves one to another in a regular subordination of members, in some measure as it is in the natural body; by this means they will be in some capacity to act with united strength: and thus Christ has appointed that it should be in the visible church, as 1 Cor. xii. 14, to the end, and Rom. xii. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. Zeal without order will do but little, or at least it will be effectual but a little while. Let a company that are very zealous against the enemy, go forth to war, without any manner of order, every one rushing forward as his zeal shall drive him, all in confusion, if they gain something at first onset, by surprising the enemy, yet how soon do they come to nothing, and fall an easy, helpless prey to their adversaries! Order is one of the most necessary of all external means of the spiritual good of God's church; and therefore it is requisite, even in heaven itself, where there is the least need of any external means of grace; order is maintained among the glorious angels there. And the necessity of it in order to the carrying on any design, wherein a multitude are concerned, is so great, that even the devils in hell are driven to something of it, that they may carry on the designs of their kingdom. And it is very observable, that those kinds of irrational creatures, for whom it is needful that they should act in union and join a multitude together, to carry on any work for their preservation, they do by a wonderful instinct that God has put into them, observe and maintain a most regular and exact order among themselves: such as bees and some others. And order in the visible church is not only necessary to the carrying on the designs of Christ's glory and the church's prosperity, but it is absolutely necessary to its defence; without it, it is like a city without walls, and can be in no capacity to defend itself from any kind of mischief: and so, however it be an external thing, yet it is not to be despised on that account; for though it be not the food of souls, yet it is in some respect their defence. The people of Holland would be very foolish to despise the dikes that keep out the sea from overwhelming them, under the names of dead stones and vile earth, because the matter of which they are built is not good to eat.

It seems to be partly on the foundation of this notion of the worthlessness of external order, that some have seemed to act on that principle, that the power of judging and openly censuring others should not be reserved in the hands of

particular persons, or consistories appointed thereto, but ought to be left at large, for any body that pleases to take it upon them, or that think themselves fit for it: but more of this afterwards.

On this foundation also, an orderly attending on the stated worship of God in families, has been made too light of; and it has been in some places too much of a common and customary thing to be absent from family worship, and to be abroad late in the night at religious meetings, or to attend religious conversation. Not but that this may be, on certain extraordinary occasions; I have seen the case to be such in many instances, that I have thought did afford sufficient warrant for persons to be absent from family prayer, and to be from home until very late in the night: but we should take heed that this does not become a custom or common practice; if it should be so, we shall soon find the consequences to be very ill.

It seems to be on the same foundation, of the supposed unprofitableness of external order, that it has been thought by some, that there is no need that such and such religious services and performances should be limited to any certain office in the church (of which more afterwards). And also that those offices themselves, as particularly that of the gospel ministry, need not be limited. as it used to be, to persons of a liberal education; but some of late have been for having others that they have supposed to be persons of eminent experience, publicly licensed to preach, yea, and ordained to the work of the ministry; and some ministers have seemed to favor such a thing: but how little do they seem to look forward, and consider the unavoidable consequences of opening such a door! If once it should become a custom, or a thing generally approved and allowed of, to admit persons to the work of the ministry that have had no education for it, because of their remarkable experiences, and being persons of good understanding, how many lay persons would soon appear as candidates for the work of the ministry! I doubt not but that I have been acquainted with scores that would have desired it. And how shall we know where to stop? If one is admitted because his experiences are remarkable, another will think his experiences also remarkable; and we, perhaps, shall not be able to deny but that they are near as great: if one is admitted because, besides experiences, he has good natural abilities, another by himself, and many of his neighbors, may be thought equal to him. It will be found of absolute necessity that there should be some certain, visible limits fixed, to avoid bringing odium upon ourselves, and breeding uneasiness and strife amongst others; and I know of none better, and indeed no other that can well be fixed, than those that the prophet Zechariah fixes, viz., that those only should be appointed to be pastors or shepherds in God's church, that *have been taught to keep cattle from their youth*, or that have had an education for that purpose. Those ministers that have a disposition to break over these limits, if they should do so, and make a practice of it, would break down that fence, which they themselves after a while, after they had been wearied with the ill consequences, would be glad to have somebody else build up for them. Not but that there may probably be some persons in the land, that have had no education at college, that are in themselves better qualified for the work of the ministry than some others that have taken their degrees, and are now ordained. But yet I believe the breaking over those bounds that have hitherto been set, in ordaining such persons, would in its consequences be a greater calamity, than the missing such persons in the work of the ministry. The opening a door for the admission of unlearned men to the work of the ministry, though they should be persons of extraordinary experience, would on some accounts be especially prejudicial at such a day as this;

because such persons, for want of an extensive knowledge, are oftentimes forward to lead others into those things, which a people are in danger of at such a time, above all other times, viz., impulses, vain imaginations, superstition, indiscreet zeal, and such like extremes; instead of defending them from them, for which a people especially need a shepherd, at such an extraordinary season.

Another erroneous principle that it seems to me some have been, at least, in danger of, is, that ministers, because they speak as Christ's ambassadors, may assume the same style, and speak as with the same authority that the prophets of old did, yea, that Jesus Christ himself did in the xxiiid of Matthew, *Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers*, &c., and other places; and that not only when they are speaking to the people, but also to their brethren in the ministry. Which principle is absurd, because it makes no difference in the different degrees and orders of messengers that God has sent into the world, though God has made a very great difference: for though they all come in some respect in the name of God, and with something of his authority, yet certainly there is a vast difference in the degree of authority with which God has invested them. Jesus Christ was one that was sent into the world, as God's messenger, and so was one of his apostles, and so also is an ordinary pastor of a church: but yet it does not follow, that because Jesus Christ and an ordinary minister are both messengers of God, that therefore an ordinary minister in his office, is vested with an equal degree of authority, that Christ was, in his. As there is a great difference in their authority, and as Christ came as God's messenger, in a vastly higher manner, so another style became him, more authoritative than is proper for us worms of the dust, though we also are messengers of inferior degree It would be strange if God, when he has made so great a difference in the degree in which he has invested different messengers with his authority, should make no difference as to the outward appearance and shew of authority, in style and behavior, which is proper and fit to be seen in them. Though God has put great honor upon ministers, and they may speak as his ambassadors, yet he never intended that they should have the same outward appearance of authority and majesty, either in their behavior or speech, that his Son shall have, when he comes to judgment at the last day; though both come, in different respects and degrees, in the name of the Lord: alas! Can any thing ever make it enter into the hearts of worms of the dust, that it is fit and suitable that it should be so?

Thus I have considered the two first of those three causes of error in conduct that were mentioned: I come now to the

Third and last cause of the errors of those that have appeared to be the subjects or zealous promoters of this work, viz., a being ignorant or unobservant of some particular things, by which the devil has special advantage.

And here I would particularly take notice:

1. Of some things with respect to the inward experiences of Christians themselves. And,

2. Something with regard to the external effects of experiences.

There are three things I would take notice of with regard to the experiences of Christians, by which the devil has many advantages against us.

1. The first thing is the *mixture* there oftentimes is in the experiences of true Christians; whereby when they have truly gracious experiences, and divine and spiritual discoveries and exercises, they have something else mixed with them, besides what is spiritual: there is a mixture of that which is natural, and that which is corrupt, with that which is divine. This is what Christians are liable to in the present exceeding imperfect state: the great imperfection of

grace, and feebleness and infancy of the new nature, and the great remains of corruption, together with the circumstances we are in, in this world, where we are encompassed all around with what tends to pollute us, exposes to this. And indeed it is not to be supposed that Christians ever have any experiences in this world that are wholly pure, entirely spiritual, without any mixture of what is natural and carnal: the beam of light, as it comes from the fountain of light upon our hearts, is pure, but as it is reflected thence, it is mixed: the seed, as sent from heaven and planted in the heart, is pure, but as it springs up out of the heart, is impure; yea, there is commonly a much greater mixture, than persons for the most part seem to have any imagination of; I have often thought that the experiences of true Christians are very frequently as it is with some sorts of fruits, that are enveloped in several coverings of thick shells or pods, that are thrown away by him that gathers the fruit, and but a very small part of the whole bulk is the pure kernel, that is good to eat.

The things, of all which there is frequently some mixture with gracious experiences, yea, with very great and high experiences, are these three, *human, or natural affection and passion; impressions on the imagination;* and a degree of *self-righteousness* or *spiritual pride*. There is very often with that which is spiritual a great mixture of that affection or passion which arises from natural principles; so that nature has a very great hand in those vehement motions and flights of the passions that appear. Hence the same degrees of divine communications from heaven, shall have vastly different effects, in what outwardly appears, in persons of different natural tempers. The great mixture of that which is natural with that which is spiritual, is very manifest in the peculiar effects that divine influences have in some certain families, or persons of such a blood, in a distinguishing manner of the operating of the passions and affections, and the manner of the outward expressions of them. I know some remarkable instances of this. The same is also evident by the different effects of divine communications on the same person at different times, and in different circumstances: the novelty of things, or the sudden transition from an opposite extreme, and many other things that might be mentioned, greatly contribute to the raising of the passions. And sometimes there is not only a mixture of that which is common and natural with gracious experience, but even that which is animal, that which is in a great measure from the body, and is properly the result of the animal frame. In what true Christians feel of affections towards God, all is not always purely holy and divine; every thing that is felt in the affections does not arise from spiritual principles, but common and natural principles have a very great hand; an improper self-love may have a great share in the effect: God is not loved for his own sake, or for the excellency and beauty of his own perfections, as he ought to be; nor have these things in any wise that proportion in the effect that they ought to have. So in that love that true Christians have one to another, very often there is a great mixture of what arises from common and natural principles, with grace; and self love has a great hand: the children of God are not loved purely for Christ' sake, but there may be a great mixture of that natural love that many sects of heretics have boasted of, who have been greatly united one to another, because they were of their company, on their side, against the rest of the world; yea, there may be a mixture of natural love to the opposite sex, with Christian and divine love. So there may be a great mixture in that sorrow for sin that the godly have; and also in their joys; natural principles may greatly contribute to what is felt, a great many ways, as might easily be shown, would it not make my discourse too lengthy. There is nothing that belongs to Christian experi-

ence that is more liable to a corrupt mixture than zeal; though it be an excellent virtue, a heavenly flame, when it is pure: but as it is exercised in those who are so little sanctified, and so little humbled, as we are in the present state, it is very apt to be mixed with human passion, yea, with corrupt hateful affections, pride and uncharitable bitterness, and other things that are not from heaven but from hell.

Another thing that is often mixed with what is spiritual in the experiences of Christians, is, impressions on the imagination; whereby godly persons, together with a spiritual understanding of divine things, and conviction of their reality and certainty, and a strong and deep sense of their excellency or great importance upon their hearts, have strongly impressed on their minds external ideas or images of things. A degree of imagination in such a case, as I have observed elsewhere, is unavoidable, and necessarily arises from human nature, as constituted in the present state; and a degree of imagination is really useful, and often is of great benefit; but when it is in too great a degree, it becomes an impure mixture that is prejudicial. This mixture very often arises from the constitution of the body. It commonly greatly contributes to the other kind of mixture mentioned before, viz., of natural affections and passions; it helps to raise them to a great height.

Another thing that is often mixed with the experiences of true Christians, which is the worst mixture of all, is a degree of self-righteousness or spiritual pride. This is often mixed with the joys of Christians; the joy that they have is not purely the joy of faith, or a rejoicing in Christ Jesus, but is partly a rejoicing in themselves; there is oftentimes in their elevations a looking upon themselves, and a viewing their own high attainments; they rejoice partly because they are taken with their own experiences and great discoveries, which makes them in their own apprehensions so to excel; and this heightens all their passions, and especially those effects that are more external.

There is a much greater mixture of these things in the experiences of some Christians than others; in some the mixture is so great, as very much to obscure and hide the beauty of grace in them, like a thick smoke that hinders all the shining of the fire.

These things we ought to be well aware of, that we may not take all for gold that glistens, and that we may know what to countenance and encourage, and what to discourage; otherwise Satan will have a vast advantage against us, for he works in the corrupt mixture. Sometimes for want of persons distinguishing the ore from the pure metal, those experiences are most admired by the persons themselves that are the subjects of them, and by others that are not the most excellent. The great external effects, and vehemence of the passions, and violent agitations of the animal spirits, is sometimes much owing to the corrupt mixture (as is very apparent in some instances); though it be not always so.

I have observed a great difference among those that are under high affections, and seem disposed to be earnestly talking to those that are about them; some insist much more, in their talk, on what they behold in God and Christ, the glory of the divine perfections, Christ's beauty and excellency and wonderful condescension and grace, and their own unworthiness, and the great and infinite obligations that they themselves and others are under to love and serve God; some insist almost wholly on their own high privileges, their assurance, and of God's love and favor, and the weakness and wickedness of opposers, and how much they are above their reach. The latter may have much of the presence of God, but their experiences do not appear to be so solid and unmixed as

the former. And there is a great deal of difference in persons' earnestness in their talk and behavior; in some it seems to come indeed from the fulness of their hearts, and from the great sense they have of truth, a deep sense of the certainty and infinite greatness, excellency, and importance of divine and eternal things, attended with all appearances of great humility; in others their earnestness seems to arise from a great mixture of human passion, and an undue and intemperate agitation of the spirits, which appears by their earnestness and vehemence not being proportioned to the nature of the subject they insist on, but they are violent in every thing they say, as much when they are talking of things of smaller importance, as when speaking of things of greater weight. I have seen it thus in an instance or two, in which this vehemence at length issued in distraction. And there have been some few instances of a more extraordinary nature still, even of persons finding themselves disposed earnestly to talk and cry out, from an unaccountable kind of bodily pressure, without any extraordinary view of any thing in their minds, or sense of any thing upon their hearts, wherein probably there was the immediate hand of the devil.

II. Another thing by which the devil has great advantage, is, the unheeded *defects* there sometimes are in the experiences of true Christians, and those high affections wherein there is much that is truly good.

What I now have respect to, is something diverse from that defect, or imperfection of degree, which is in every holy disposition and exercise in this life, in the best of the saints. What I aim at is experiences being especially defective in some particular thing, that ought to be in them; which, though it is not an essential defect, or such a defect as is in the experiences of hypocrites, which renders them utterly vain, monstrous, and altogether abominable to God, yet is such a defect as maims and deforms the experience; the essence of truly Christian experiences is not wanting, but yet that is wanting that is very needful in order to the proper beauty of the image of Christ in such a person's experiences; but things are very much out of a due proportion: there is indeed much of some things, but at the same time there is so little of some other things that should bear a proportion, that the defect very much deforms the Christian, and is truly odious in the sight of God.

What I observed before was something that deformed the Christian, as it was *too much*, something mixed, that is, not belonging to the Christian as such; what I speak of now is something that deforms the Christian the other way, viz., by there *not* being *enough*, something wanting, that does belong to the Christian as such: the one deforms the Christian as a monstrous excrescence, the other as thereby the new creature is maimed, and some member in a great measure wanting, or so small and withering as to be very much out of due proportion. This is another spiritual calamity that the saints are liable to, through the great imperfection of grace in this life; like the chicken in the egg, in the beginning of its formation, in which, though there are indeed the rudiments or lineaments of all the parts, yet some few parts are plain to be seen, when others are hid, so that without a microscope it appears very monstrous.

When this deficiency and disproportion is great, as sometimes it is in real saints, it is not only a great deformity in itself, but has many ill consequences; it gives the devil great advantage, and leaves a door open for corruption, and exposes to very deformed and unlovely actions, and issues oftentimes in the great wounding of the soul.

For the better understanding of this matter, we may observe that God, in the revelation that he has made of himself to the world by Jesus Christ, has taken care to give a proportionable manifestation of two kinds of excellencies

or perfections of his nature, viz., those that especially tend to possess us with awe and reverence, and to search and humble us, and those that tend to win, and draw, and encourage us: by *the one*, he appears as an infinitely great, pure, holy, and heart-searching judge; by *the other*, as a gentle and gracious father and a loving friend: by the one he is a pure, searching, and burning flame; by the other, a sweet refreshing light. These two kinds of attributes are as it were admirably tempered together in the revelation of the gospel: there is a proportionable manifestation of justice and mercy, holiness and grace, majesty and gentleness, authority and condescension. God hath thus ordered that his diverse excellencies, as he reveals himself in the face of Jesus Christ, should have a proportionable manifestation, herein providing for our necessities; he knew it to be of great consequence that our apprehensions of these diverse perfections of his nature should be duly proportioned one to another; a defect on the one hand, viz., having much of a discovery of his love and grace, without a proportionable discovery of his awful majesty, and his holy and searching purity, would tend to spiritual pride, carnal confidence, and presumption; and a defect on the other hand, viz., having much of a discovery of his holy majesty, without a proportionable discovery of his grace, tends to unbelief, a sinful fearfulness, and spirit of bondage: and therefore herein chiefly consists that deficiency of experiences that I am now speaking of. The revelation God has made of himself in his word, and the provision made for our spiritual welfare in the gospel, is perfect, but yet the actual light and communications we have are not perfect, but many ways exceeding imperfect and maimed. And experience plainly shows that Christians may have high experiences in some respects, and yet their circumstances may be unhappy in this regard, that their experiences and discoveries are no more general. There is a great difference among Christians in this respect; some have much more general discoveries than others, who are upon many accounts the most amiable Christians. Christians may have experiences that are very high, and yet there may be very much of this deficiency and disproportion: their high experiences are truly from the Spirit of God, but sin comes in by the defect (as indeed all sin is originally from a defective privative cause); and in such a case high discoveries, at the same time that they are enjoyed, may be, and sometimes are the occasion, or *causa sine qua non* of sin; sin may come in at that back door, the gap that is left open; as spiritual pride often does: and many times the Spirit of God is quenched by this means, and God punishes the pride and presumption that rises, by bringing such darkness, and suffering such awful consequences and horrid temptations, as are enough to make one's hair stand on end to hear them. Christians therefore should diligently observe their own hearts as to this matter, and should pray to God that he would give us experiences in which one thing may bear a proportion to another, that God may be honored and their souls edified thereby; and ministers should have an eye to this, in their private dealings with the souls of their people.

It is chiefly from such a defect of experiences that some things have arisen that have been pretty common among true Christians of late, that have been supposed by many to have risen from a good cause; as particularly talking of divine and heavenly things, and expressing divine joys with laughter or a light behavior. I believe, in many instances, such things have arisen from a good cause, as their *causa sine qua non*, that high discoveries and gracious joyful affections have been the occasion of them; but the proper cause has been sin, even that odious defect in their experience, whereby there has been wanting a sense of the awful and holy majesty of God as present with them, and their no-

thingness and vileness before him, proportionable to the sense they have had of God's grace and the love of Christ. And the same is true in many cases of persons' unsuitable boldness, their disposition to speak with authority, intemperate zeal, and many other things that sometimes appear in true Christians, under great religious affections.

And sometimes the vehemence of the motion of the animal spirits, under great affections, is owing, in considerable measure, to experiences being thus partial. I have known it in several instances, that persons have been greatly affected with the dying love of Christ, and the consideration of the happiness of the enjoyment of him in heaven, and other things of that nature, and their animal spirits at the same time have been in a great emotion, but in the midst of it have had given them a deep sense of the awful, holy majesty of God, and it has at once composed them, and quieted animal nature, without diminishing their comfort, but only has made it of a better and more solid nature; when they have had a sense both of the majesty and grace of God, one thing has as it were balanced another, and caused a more happy sedateness and composure of body and mind.

From these things we may learn how to judge of experiences, and to estimate their goodness. Those are not always the best experiences, that are attended with the most violent affections, and most vehement motions of the animal spirits, or that have the greatest effects on the body; nor are they always the best, that do most dispose persons to abound in talk to others, and to speak in the most vehement manner (though these things often arise from the greatness of spiritual experiences); but those are the most excellent experiences that are qualified as follows:

1. That have the least mixture, or are the most purely spiritual.

2. That are the least deficient and partial, in which the diverse things that appertain to Christian experience are proportionable one to another. And,

3. That are raised to the highest degree: it is no matter how high they are raised if they are qualified as before mentioned, the higher the better. Experiences thus qualified, will be attended with the most amiable behavior, and will bring forth the most solid and sweet fruits, and will be the most durable, and will have the greatest effect on the abiding temper of the soul.

If God is pleased to carry on this work, and it should prove to be the dawning of a general revival of the Christian church, it may be expected that the time will come before long, when the experiences of Christians shall be much more generally thus qualified. We must expect green fruits before we have ripe ones. It is probable that hereafter the discoveries which the saints shall have of divine things, will be in a much higher degree than yet have been; but yet shall be so ordered of an infinitely wise and all-sufficient God, that they shall not have so great an effect, in proportion, on the body, and will be less oppressive to nature; and that the outward manifestations will rather be like those that were in Stephen, when he was full of the Holy Ghost, when *all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face, as it had been the face of an angel.* Their inward fulness of the Spirit of God, in his divine, amiable, and sweet influences, shall as it were shine forth in a heavenly aspect, and manner of speech and behavior. But,

III. There is another thing concerning experiences of Christians, of which it is of yet greater importance that we should be aware, than either of the preceding, and that is the *degenerating of experiences.* What I mean is something diverse from the mere decay of experiences, or their gradually vanishing, by persons losing their sense of things; it is persons' experiences growing by de-

grees worse and worse in their kind, more and more partial and deficient, in which things are more out of due proportion; and also have more and more of a corrupt mixture, the spiritual part decreases, and the other useless and hurtful parts greatly increase. There is such a thing, and it is very frequent, as experience abundantly evidences: I have seen it in very many instances; and great are the mischiefs that have arisen through want of being more aware of it.

There is commonly, as I observed before, in high experiences, besides that which is spiritual, a mixture of three things, viz., natural or common affections and workings of the imagination, and a degree of self-righteousness or spiritual pride. Now it often comes to pass, that through persons not distinguishing the wheat from the chaff, and for want of watchfulness and humble jealousy of themselves, and laying great weight on the natural and imaginary part, and yielding to it, and indulging of it, that part grows and increases, and the spiritual part decreases; the devil sets in, and works in the corrupt part, and cherishes it to his utmost; until at length the experiences of some persons, who began well, come to but little else, but violent motions of carnal affections, with great heats of the imagination, and a great degree of enthusiasm, and swelling of spiritual pride; very much like some fruits which bud, blossom, and kernel well, but afterwards are blasted with an excess of moisture; so that though the bulk is monstrously great, yet there is little else in it but what is useless and unwholesome. It appears to me very probable, that many of the heresies that have arisen, and sects that have appeared in the Christian world, in one age and another, with wild enthusiastical notions and practices, began at first by this means, that it was such a degenerating of experiences that first gave rise to them, or at least led the way to them.

There is nothing in the world that does so much expose to this degenerating of experiences, as an unheeded spiritual pride and self-confidence, and persons being conceited of their own stock, without a humble, daily, and continued dependence on God. And this very thing seems to be typified of old, by the corrupting of the manna. Some of the children of Israel, because they had gathered a store of manna, trusted in it, there being, as they apprehended, sufficient in the store they had gathered and laid up, without humbly looking to heaven, and stooping to the earth for daily supplies; and the consequence was, that their manna bred worms and stank, Exod. xvi. 20. Pride, above all things, promotes this degeneracy of experiences, because it grieves and quenches the Spirit of the Lamb of God, and so kills the spiritual part; and it cherishes the natural part, it inflames the carnal affections, and heats the imagination.

The unhappy person that is the subject of such a degeneracy of experiences, for the most part, is not sensible of his own calamity; but because he finds himself still violently moved, and greater heats of zeal, and more vehement motions of his animal spirits, thinks himself fuller of the Spirit of God than ever. But indeed it is with him, as the apostle says of the Galatians, Gal. iii. 3, "Having begun in the Spirit, they are made perfect by the flesh."

By the mixture there is of common affection with love to God, the love of true Christians is liable to degenerate, and to be more and more built on the foundation of a supposition of being his high and peculiar favorites, and less and less on an apprehension of the excellency of God's nature, as he is in himself. So the joy of Christians, by reason of the mixture there is with spiritual joy, is liable to degenerate, and to come to that at last, as to be but little else but joy in self, joy in a person's own supposed eminency, and distinction from others in the favor of God. So zeal, that at first might be in great part spiritual, yet through the mixture there is, in a long continuance of opposition and con-

troversy, may degenerate more and more into human and proud passion, and may come to bitterness, and even a degree of hatred. And so love to the brethren may by degrees come to but little else but fondness, and zeal for a party; yea, through a mixture of a natural love to the opposite sex, may degenerate more and more, until it issues in that which is criminal and gross. And I leave it with those who are better acquainted with ecclesiastical history, to inquire whether such a degeneracy of affections as this, might not be the first thing that led the way, and gave occasion to the rise of the abominable notions of some sects that have arisen, concerning the community of women. However that is, yet certainly the mutual embraces and kisses of persons of different sexes, under the notion of Christian love and holy kisses, are utterly to be disallowed and abominated, as having the most direct tendency quickly to turn Christian love into unclean and brutish lust, which will not be the better, but ten times the worse, for being christened by the name of Christian love.

I should also think it advisable, that meetings of young people, of both sexes, in the evening, by themselves, without a minister, or any elder people amongst them, for religious exercises, should be avoided: for though for the present, while their minds are greatly solemnized with lively impressions, and a deep sense of divine things, there may appear no ill consequence; yet we must look to the further end of things, and guard against future dangers and advantages that Satan might gain against us. As a lively, solemn sense of divine things on the minds of young persons may gradually decay, so there will be danger that an ill improvement of these meetings may gradually prevail; if not in any unsuitable behavior while together in the meeting, yet when they break up to go home, they may naturally consort together in couples, for other than religious purposes; and it may at last come to that, that young persons may go to such meetings, chiefly for the sake of such an opportunity for company keeping.

The *defect* there sometimes is in the experiences of Christians exposes them to degenerate, as well as the mixture that they have. Deficient maimed experiences do sometimes become more and more so: the mind, being wholly intent upon those things that are in view, and those that are most wanting being neglected, there is less and less of them, and so the gap for corruption to come in grows wider and wider. And commonly both these causes of the degenerating of experiences operate together.

We had need to be jealous over ourselves with a godly jealousy, as the apostle was over the Christian Corinthians, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so our minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. God indeed will never suffer his true saints totally and finally to fall away, but yet may punish their pride and self-confidence, by suffering them to be long led into a dreadful wilderness, by the subtle serpent, to the great wounding of their own souls, and the interest of religion.

And before I dismiss this head of the degenerating of experiences, I would mention one thing more that tends to it; and that is, persons' aiming in their experience to go beyond the rule of God's word, i. e., aiming at that, *which is indeed*, in some respect, beyond the rule. Thus some persons have endeavored utterly to root out and abolish all natural affection, or any special affection or respect to their near relations, under a notion that no other love ought to be allowed but spiritual love, and that all other love is to be abolished as carnal, and that it becomes Christians to love none upon the account of any thing else, but the image of God; and that therefore love should go out to one and another only in that proportion in which the image of God is seen in them. They might as well argue that a man ought utterly to disallow of, and endeavor to abolish

all love or appetite to his daily food, under a notion that it is a carnal appetite, and that no other appetite should be tolerated but spiritual appetites. Why should the saints strive after that, as a high attainment in holiness, which the apostle in Rom. i. 31, mentions as one instance wherein the heathen had got to the most horrid pass in wickedness, viz., *a being without natural affection?*

Some have doubted whether they might pray for the conversion and salvation of the souls of their children, any more than for the souls of others; because the salvation of the souls of others would be as much to God's glory, as the salvation of their children; and they have supposed that to pray most for their own, would show a selfish disposition. So they have been afraid to tolerate a compassionate grief and concern for their nearest friends, for fear it would be an argument of want of resignation to God.

And it is true, there is great danger of persons setting their hearts too much upon their earthly friends; our love to earthly friends ought to be under the government of the love of God, and should be attended with a spirit of submission and resignation to his will, and every thing should be subordinated to his glory: but that is no argument that these affections should be entirely abolished, which the Creator of the world has put within mankind, for the good of mankind, and because he saw they would be needful for them, as they must be united in society, in the present state, and are of great use, when kept in their proper place; and to endeavor totally to root them out, would be to reproach and oppose the wisdom of the Creator. Nor is the being of these natural inclinations, if well regulated, inconsistent with any part of our duty to God, or any argument of a sinful selfishness, any more than the natural abhorrence that there is in the human nature of pain, and natural inclination to ease that was in the man Christ Jesus himself.

It is the duty of parents to be more concerned, and to pray more for the salvation of their children, than for the children of their neighbors; as much as it is the duty of a minister to be more concerned for the salvation of the souls of his flock, and to pray more for them, than those of other congregations, because they are committed to his care; so our near friends are more committed to our care than others, and our near neighbors, than those that live at a great distance; and the people of our land and nation are more in some sense committed to our care than the people of China, and we ought to pray more for them, and to be more concerned that the kingdom of Christ should flourish among them, than in another country, where it would be as much, and no more for the glory of God. Compassion ought to be especially exercised towards friends, Job, vi. 14. Christ did not frown upon a special affection and compassion for near friends, but countenanced and encouraged it, from time to time, in those that in the exercise of such an affection and compassion, applied to him for relief for their friends; as in the instance of the woman of Canaan, Jairus, Mary and Martha, the centurion, the widow of Nain, and many others. The Apostle Paul, though a man as much resigned and devoted to God, and under the power of his love, perhaps as any mere man that ever lived, yet had a peculiar concern for his countrymen the Jews, the rather on that account that they were his *brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh;* he had a very high degree of compassionate grief for them, insomuch, that he tells us he had great heaviness and continual sorrow of heart for them, and could wish himself accursed from Christ for them.

There are many things that are proper for the saints in heaven, that are not suitable to the state God has set us in, in this world: and for Christians, in these

and other instances, to affect to go beyond the present state of mankind, and what God has appointed as fit for it, is an instance of that which the wise man calls *a being righteous overmuch*, and has a tendency to open a door for Satan, and to cause religious affections to degenerate into something very unbecoming of Christians.

Thus I have, as I proposed, taken notice of some things with regard to the inward experiences of Christians, by which Satan has an advantage.

I now proceed in the

2d Place, to take notice of something with regard to the external effects of experiences, which also gives Satan an advantage. What I have respect to, is the secret and unaccountable influence that custom has upon persons, with respect to the external effects and manifestations of the inward affections of the mind. By custom I mean both a person's being accustomed to a thing in himself, in his own common, allowed, and indulged practice, and also the countenance and approbation of others amongst whom he dwells, by their general voice and practice. It is well known, and appears sufficiently by what I have said already in this treatise and elsewhere, that I am far from ascribing all the late uncommon effects and outward manifestations of inward experiences to custom and fashion, as some do; I know it to be otherwise, if it be possible for me to know any thing of this nature by the most critical observation, under all manner of opportunities of observing. But yet this also is exceeding evident by experience, that custom has a strange influence in these things: I know it by the different manners and degrees of external effects and manifestations of great affections and high discoveries, in different towns, according to what persons are gradually led into, and insensibly habituated to, by example and custom; and also in the same place, at different times, according to the conduct that they have: if some person is among them to conduct them, that much countenances and encourages such kind of outward manifestations of great affections, they naturally and insensibly prevail, and grow by degrees unavoidable; but when afterwards they come under another kind of conduct, the manner of external appearances will strangely alter: and yet it seems to be without any proper design or contrivance of those in whom there is this alteration; it is not properly affected by them, but the influence of example and custom is secret and insensible to the persons themselves. These things have a vast influence in the manner of persons manifesting their joys, whether with smiles or an air of lightness, or whether with more solemnity and reverence; and so they have a great influence as to the disposition persons have, under high affections, to abound in talk; and also as to the manner of their speaking, the loudness and vehemence of their speech; (though it would be exceeding unjust, and against all the evidence of fact and experience, and the reason of things, to lay all dispositions persons have to be much in speaking to others, and to speak in a very earnest manner, to custom.) It is manifest that example and custom have some way or other, a secret and unsearchable influence on those actions that are involuntary, by the difference that there is in different places, and in the same places at different times, according to the diverse examples and conduct that they have.

Therefore, though it would be very unreasonable, and prejudicial to the interest of religion, to frown upon all these extraordinary external effects and manifestations of great religious affections (for a measure of them is natural, necessary, and beautiful, and the effect in no wise disproportioned to the spiritual cause, and is of great benefit to promote religion), yet I think they greatly err who think that these things should be wholly unlimited, and that all should be

encouraged in going in these things to the utmost length that they feel themselves inclined to: the consequence of this will be very bad: there ought to be a gentle restraint held upon these things, and there should be a prudent care taken of persons in such extraordinary circumstances, and they should be moderately advised, at proper seasons, not to make more ado than there is need of, but rather to hold a restraint upon their inclinations; otherwise extraordinary outward effects will grow upon them, they will be more and more natural and unavoidable, and the extraordinary outward show will increase, without any increase of the internal cause; persons will find themselves under a kind of necessity of making a great ado, with less and less affection of soul, until at length almost any slight emotion will set them going, and they will be more and more violent and boisterous, and will grow louder and louder, until their actions and behavior become indeed very absurd. These things experience proves.

Thus I have taken notice of the more general causes whence the errors that have attended this great revival of religion have risen, and under each head have observed some particular errors that have flowed from these fountains. I now proceed as I proposed in the

Second place, to take notice of some particular errors that have risen from several of these causes; in some perhaps they have been chiefly owing to one, and in others to another, and in others to the influence of several, or all conjunctly. And here the

1*st* Thing I would take notice of, is, censuring others that are professing Christians, in good standing in the visible church, as unconverted. I need not repeat what I have elsewhere said to show this to be against the plain, and frequent, and strict prohibitions of the word of God: it is the worst disease that has attended this work, most contrary to the spirit and rules of Christianity, and of worse consequences. There is a most unhappy tincture that the minds of many, both ministers and people, have received that way. The manner of many has been, when they first enter into conversation with any person, that seems to have any shew or make any pretences to religion, to discern him, or to fix a judgment of him, from his manner of talking of things of religion, whether he be converted, or experimentally acquainted with vital piety or not, and then to treat him accordingly, and freely to express their thoughts of him to others, especially those that they have a good opinion of as true Christians, and accepted as brethren and companions in Christ; or if they do not declare their minds expressly, yet by their manner of speaking of them, at least to their friends, they will show plainly what their thoughts are. So when they have heard any minister pray or preach, their first work has been to observe him on a design of discerning him, whether he be a converted man or no; whether he prays like one that feels the saving power of God's Spirit in his heart, and whether he preaches like one that knows what he says. It has been so much the way in some places, that many new converts do not know but it is their duty to do so, they know no other way. And when once persons yield to such a notion, and give in to such a humor, they will quickly grow very discerning in their own apprehension, they think they can easily tell a hypocrite: and when once they have passed their censure every thing seems to confirm it, they see more and more in the person that they have censured, that seems to them to shew plainly that he is an unconverted man. And then, if the person censured be a minister, every thing in his public performances seems dead and sapless, and to do them no good at all, but on the contrary to be of deadening influence, and poisonous to the soul; yea, it seems worse and worse to them, his preaching grows more and more intolerable: which is owing to a secret, strong prejudice, that steals in

more and more upon the mind, as experience plainly and certainly shows. When the Spirit of God was wonderfully poured out in this place, more than seven years ago, and near thirty souls in a week, take one with another, for five or six weeks together, were to appearance brought home to Christ, and all the town seemed to be alive and full of God, there was no such notion or humor prevailing here; when ministers preached here, as very many did at that time, young and old, our people did not go about to discern whether they were men of experience or not; they did not know that they must: Mr. Stoddard never brought them up in that way; it did not seem natural to them to go about any thing of that nature, nor did any such thing enter in their hearts; but when any minister preached, the business of every one was to listen and attend to what he said, and apply it to his own heart, and make the utmost improvement of it. And it is remarkable, that never did there appear such a disposition in the people, to relish, approve of, and admire ministers' preaching as at that time: such expressions as these were frequent in the mouths of one and another, on occasion of the preaching of strangers here, viz., *That they rejoiced that there were so many such eminent ministers in the country; and they wondered they had never heard the fame of them before: they were thankful that other towns had so good means;* and the like.—And scarcely ever did any minister preach here, but his preaching did some remarkable service; as I had good opportunity to know, because, at that time, I had particular acquaintance with most of the persons in the town, in their soul concerns. That it has been so much otherwise of late in many places in the land, is another instance of the secret and powerful influence of custom and example.

There has been an unhappy disposition in some ministers toward their brethren in the ministry in this respect, which has encouraged and greatly promoted such a spirit among some of their people. A wrong improvement has been made of Christ's scourging the buyers and sellers out of the temple; it has been expected by some, that Christ was now about thus to purge his house of unconverted ministers, and this has made it more natural to them to think that they should do Christ service, and act as co-workers with him, to put to their hand, and endeavor by all means to cashier those ministers that they thought to be unconverted. Indeed, it appears to me probable that the time is coming, when awful judgments will be executed on unfaithful ministers, and that no sort of men in the world will be so much exposed to divine judgments; but then we should leave that work to Christ, who is the searcher of hearts, and to whom vengeance belongs; and not without warrant, take the scourge out of his hand into our own. There has been too much of a disposition in some, as it were to give ministers over as reprobates, that have been looked upon as wolves in sheep's clothing; which has tended to promote and encourage a spirit of bitterness towards them, and to make it natural to treat them too much as if they knew God hated them. If God's children knew that others were reprobates, it would not be required of them to love them; we may hate those that we know God hates; as it is lawful to hate the devil, and as the saints at the day of judgment will hate the wicked. Some have been too apt to look for fire from heaven upon particular ministers; and this has naturally excited that disposition to call for it, that Christ rebuked in his disciples at Samaria. For my part, though I believe no sort of men on earth are so exposed to spiritual judgments as wicked ministers, yet I feel no disposition to treat any minister as if I supposed that he was finally rejected of God; for I cannot but hope that there is coming a day of such great grace, a time so appointed for the magnifying the riches and sovereignty of divine mercy, beyond what ever was, that a great number of un-

converted ministers will obtain mercy. There was no sort of persons in Christ's time that were so guilty, and so hardened, and towards whom Christ manifested such great indignation, as the Priests and Scribes, and there were no such persecutors of Christ and his disciples as they; and yet in that great outpouring of the Spirit that began on the day of pentecost, though it began with the common people, yet in the progress of the work, after a while, *a great company of priests in Jerusalem were obedient to the faith*, Acts vi. 7. And Saul, one of the most violent of all the persecuting Pharisees, became afterwards the greatest promoter of the work of God that ever was. I hope we shall yet see in many instances a fulfilment of that in Isa. xxix. 24, "They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine."

Nothing has been gained by this practice. The end that some have aimed at in it has not been obtained, nor is ever like to be. Possibly some have openly censured ministers, and encouraged their people's uneasiness under them, in hopes that it would soon come to that, that the uneasiness would be so general, and so great, that unconverted ministers in general would be cast off, and that then things would go on happily: but there is no likelihood of it. The devil indeed has obtained his end; this practice has bred a great deal of unhappiness among ministers and people, has spoiled Christians' enjoyment of sabbaths, and made them their most uneasy, uncomfortable and unprofitable days, and has stirred up great contention, and set all in a flame; and in one place and another where there was a glorious work of God's Spirit begun, it has in a great measure knocked all in the head, and their ministers hold their places. Some have aimed at a better end in censuring ministers; they have supposed it to be a likely means to awaken them: whereas indeed, there is no one thing has had so great a tendency to prevent the awakening of disaffected ministers in general: and no one thing has actually had such influence to lock up the minds of ministers against any good effect of this great work of God in the land upon their minds in this respect: I have known instances of some that seemed to be much moved by the first appearance of this work, but since have seemed to be greatly deadened by what has appeared of this nature. And if there be one or two instances of ministers that have been awakened by it, there are ten to one on whom it has had a contrary influence. The worst enemies of this work have been inwardly eased by this practice; they have made a shield of it to defend their consciences, and have been glad that it has been carried to so great a length; at the same time that they have looked upon it, and improved it, as a door opened for them to be more bold in opposing the work in general.

There is no such dreadful danger of natural men's being undone by our forbearing thus to censure them, and carrying it towards them as visible Christians; it will be no bloody, hell-peopling charity, as some seem to suppose, when it is known that we do not treat them as Christians, because we have taken it upon us to pass a judgment on their state, on any trial, or exercise of our skill in examining and discerning them, but only as allowing them to be worthy of a public charity, on their profession and good external behavior; any more than Judas was in danger of being deceived, by Christ's treating him a long time as a disciple, and sending him forth as an apostle, (because he did not then take it upon him to act as the Judge and Searcher of hearts, but only as the Head of the visible church). Indeed, such a charity as this may be abused by some, as every thing is, and will be, that is in its own nature proper, and of never so good tendency. I say nothing against dealing thoroughly with conscience, by the most convincing and searching dispensation of the word of God: I do not desire that that sword should be sheathed, or gently handled by ministers; but let it be

used as a two edged sword, to pierce, even to the dividing asunder soul and spirit, joints and marrow; let conscience be dealt with, without any compliments; let ministers handle it in flaming fire, without having any more mercy on it, than the furnace has on those metals that are tried in it. But let us let men's persons alone: let the word of God judge them, but do not let us take it upon us until we have warrant for it.

Some have been ready to censure ministers because they seem, in comparison of some other ministers, to be very cold and lifeless in their ministerial performances. But then it should be considered that for aught we know, God may hereafter raise up ministers of so much more excellent and heavenly qualifications, and so much more spiritual and divine in their performances, that there may appear as great a difference between them, and those that now seem the most lively, as there is now between them, and others that are called dead and sapless; and those that are now called lively ministers may appear to their hearers, when they compare them with others that shall excel them, as wretchedly mean, and their performances poor, dead, dry things; and many may be ready to be prejudiced against them, as accounting them good for nothing, and it may be calling them soul murderers. What a poor figure may we suppose, the most lively of us, and those that are most admired by the people, do make in the eyes of one of the saints of heaven, any otherwise than as their deadness, deformity, and rottenness is hid by the vail of Christ's righteousness?

Another thing that has been supposed to be sufficient warrant for openly censuring ministers as unconverted, is their opposing this work of God, that has lately been carried on in the land. And there can be no doubt with me but that opposition against this work may be such, as to render either ministers or people truly scandalous, and to expose them to public ecclesiastical censure; and that ministers hereby may utterly defeat the design of the ministry, as I observed before; and so give their people just cause of uneasiness; I should not think that any person had power to oblige me constantly to attend the ministry of one, who did from time to time, plainly pray and preach against this work, or speak reproachfully of it frequently in his public performances, after all Christian methods had been used for a remedy, and to no purpose.

But as to determining how far opposing this work is consistent with a state of grace, or how far, and for how long time, some persons of good experience in their own souls, through prejudices they have received from the errors that have been mixed with this work, or through some peculiar disadvantages they are under to behold things in a right view of them, by reason of the persons they converse with, or their own cold and dead frames, is, as experience shows, a very difficult thing; I have seen that which abundantly convinces me that the business is too high for me; I am glad that God has not committed such a difficult affair to me; I can joyfully leave it wholly in his hands who is infinitely fit for it, without meddling at all with it myself. We may represent it as exceeding dangerous to oppose this work, for this we have good warrant in the word of God; but I know of no necessity we are under to determine whether it be possible for those that are guilty of it to be in a state of grace or no.

God seems so strictly to have forbidden this practice, of our judging our brethren in the visible church, not only because he knew that we were too much of babes, infinitely too weak, fallible, and blind, to be well capacitated for it, but also because he knew that it was not a work suited to our proud hearts; that it would be setting us vastly too high, and making us too much lords over our fellow creatures. Judging our brethren and passing a condemnatory sentence upon them, seems to carry in it an act of authority, especially

in so great a case, to sentence them with respect to that state of their hearts, on which depends their liableness to eternal damnation; as is evident by such interrogations as these (to hear which from God's mouth, is enough to make us shrink into nothing with shame and confusion, and a sense of our own blindness and worthlessness), Rom. xiv. 4, "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth." And Jam. iv. 12, "There is one lawgiver that is able to save and to destroy; who art thou that judgest another?" Our wise and merciful Shepherd has graciously taken care not to lay in our way such a temptation to pride; he has cut up all such poison out of our pasture; and therefore we should not desire to have it restored. Blessed be his name, that he has not laid such a temptation in the way of my pride! I know that in order to be fit for this business I must not only be vastly more knowing, but more humble than I am.

Though I believe some of God's own children have of late been very guilty in this matter, yet by what is said of it in the Scripture, it appears to me very likely, that before these things which God has lately begun, have an end, God will awfully rebuke that practice; may it in sovereign and infinite mercy be prevented, by the deep and open humiliation of those that have openly practised it.

As this practice ought to be avoided, so should all such open, visible, marks of distinction and separation that imply it; as particularly, distinguishing such as we have judged to be in a converted state with the compellations of *brother* or *sister*; any further than there is a visible ecclesiastical distinction. In those places where it is the manner to receive such, and such only to the communion of the visible church, as recommend themselves by giving a satisfying account of their inward experiences, there Christians may openly distinguish such persons, in their speech and ordinary behavior, with a visible separation, without being inconsistent with themselves: and I do not now pretend to meddle with that controversy, whether such an account of experience be requisite to church fellowship: but certainly, to admit persons to communion with us as brethren in the visible church, and then visibly to reject them, and to make an open distinction between them and others, by different names or appellations, is to be inconsistent with ourselves; it is to make a visible church within a visible church, and visibly to divide between sheep and goats, setting one on the right hand, and the other on the left.

This bitter root of censoriousness must be totally rooted out, as we would prepare the way of the Lord. It has nourished and upheld many other things contrary to the humility, meekness, and love of the gospel. The minds of many have received an unhappy turn, in some respects, with their religion: there is a certain point or sharpness, a disposition to a kind of warmth, that does not savor of that meek, lamblike, sweet disposition that becomes Christians: many have now been so long habituated to it, that they do not know how to get out of it; but we must get out of it; the point and sharpness must be blunted, and we must learn another way of manifesting our zeal for God.

There is a way of reflecting on others, and censuring them in open prayer, that some have; which though it has a fair show of love, yet is indeed the boldest way of reproaching others imaginable, because there is implied in it an appeal to the most high God, concerning the truth of their censures and reflections.

And here I would also observe by the way, that some have a way of joining a sort of imprecations with their petitions for others, though but conditional ones, that appear to me wholly needless and improper: they pray that others

may either be converted or removed. I never heard nor read of any such thing practised in the church of God until now, unless it be with respect to some of the most visibly and notoriously abandoned enemies of the church of God. This is a sort of cursing men in our prayers, adding a curse with our blessing; whereas the rule is, *bless and curse not.* To pray that God would kill another, is to curse him with the like curse wherewith Elisha cursed the children that came out of Bethel. And the case must be very great and extraordinary indeed to warrant it, unless we were prophets, and did not speak our own words, but words indited by the immediate inspiration of the Spirit of God. It is pleaded that if God has no design of converting others, it is best for them, as well as best for others, that they should be immediately taken away and sent to hell before they have contracted more guilt. To which I would say, that so it was best that those children that met Elisha, seeing God had no design of converting them, should die immediately as they did; but yet Elisha's imprecating that sudden death upon them, was cursing them; and therefore, would not have been lawful for one that did not speak in the name of the Lord as a prophet.

And then if we give way to such things as these, where shall we stop? A child that suspects he has an unconverted father and mother, may pray openly that his father and mother may either be converted, or taken away and sent to hell now quickly, before their guilt is greater. (For unconverted parents are as likely to poison the souls of their family in their manner of training them up, as unconverted ministers are to poison their people.) And so it might come to that, that it might be a common thing all over the country, for children to pray after this manner concerning their parents, and brethren and sisters concerning one another, and husbands concerning their wives, and wives concerning husbands; and so for persons to pray concerning all their unconverted friends and neighbors: and not only so, but we may also pray concerning all those saints that are not lively Christians, that they may either be enlivened or taken away; if that be true that is often said by some at this day, that these cold dead saints do more hurt than natural men, and lead more souls to hell, and that it would be well for mankind if they were all dead.

How needless are such petitions or imprecations as these? What benefit is there of them? Why is it not sufficient for us to pray that God would provide for his church, and the good of souls, and take care of his own flock, and give it needful means and advantages for its spiritual prosperity? Does God need to be directed by us in what way he shall do it? What need we ask of God to do it by killing such and such persons, if he does not convert them? Unless we delight in the thoughts of God's answering us in such terrible ways, and with such awful manifestations of his wrath to our fellow creatures.

And why do not ministers direct sinners to pray for themselves, that God would either convert them or kill them, and send them to hell now, before their guilt is greater? In this way we should lead persons in the next place to self-murder: for many probably would soon begin to think that that which they may pray for, they may seek, and use the means of.

Some with whom I have discoursed about this way of praying, have said, that the Spirit of God, as it were, forces them to utter themselves thus, as it were forces out such words from their mouths, when otherwise they should not dare to utter them. But such a kind of impulse does not look like the influence of the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God sometimes strongly inclines men to utter words: but not by putting expressions into the mouth, and urging to utter them; but by filling the heart with a sense of divine things, and holy affections;

and those affections and that sense incline the mouth to speak. That other way of men's being urged to use certain expressions, by an unaccountable force, is very probably from the influence of the spirit of the devil.

2. Another thing I would take notice of, in the management of which there has been much error and misconduct, is, lay exhorting; about which there has been abundance of disputing, jangling, and contention.

In the midst of all the disputes that have been, I suppose that all are agreed as to these two things, viz.

1. That all exhorting one another of laymen is not unlawful or improper, but on the contrary, that some exhorting is a Christian duty. And,

2. I suppose also, all will allow that there is something that is proper only for ministers; that there is some kind or way of exhorting and teaching or other, that belongs only to *the office of teachers*. All will allow, that God has appointed such an office as that of *teachers* in the Christian church, and therefore, doubtless will allow that something or other is proper and peculiar to that office, or some business of *teaching* that belongs to it, that does not belong as much to others as to them.

If there be any way of teaching that is peculiar to that office, then, for others to take that upon them, is to invade the office of a minister; which doubtless is very sinful, and is often so represented in Scripture. But the great difficulty is to settle the bounds, and to tell exactly, how far laymen may go, and when they exceed their limits; which is a matter of so much difficulty, that I do not wonder if many in their zeal have transgressed. The two ways of teaching and exhorting, the one of which ought ordinarily to be left to ministers, and the other of which may and ought to be practised by the people, may be expressed by those two names of *preaching*, and *exhorting* in a way of *Christian conversation*.—But then a great deal of difficulty and controversy arises to determine what is *preaching*, and what is *Christian conversation*. However, I will humbly offer my thoughts concerning this subject of lay exhorting, as follows.

I. The common people in exhorting one another ought not to clothe themselves with the like authority with that which is proper for ministers. There is a certain authority that ministers have, and should exercise in teaching, as well as governing the flock. Teaching is spoken of in Scripture as an act of authority, 1 Tim. ii. 12. In order to a man's preaching, special authority must be committed to him. Rom. x. 15, "How shall they preach except they be sent?" Ministers in this work of teaching and exhorting are clothed with authority, as Christ's messengers (Mal. ii. 7), and as representing him, and so speaking in his name, and in his stead, 2 Cor. v. 18, 19, 20. And it seems to be the most honorable thing that belongs to the office of a minister of the gospel, that to him is committed the word of reconciliation, and that he has power to preach the gospel, as Christ's messenger, and speaking in his name. The apostle seems to speak of it as such, 1 Cor. i. 16, 17. Ministers therefore, in the exercise of this power, may clothe themselves with authority in speaking, or may teach others in an authoritative manner. Tit. ii. 15, "These things speak and exhort, and rebuke with all authority: let no man despise thee." But the common people in exhorting one another, ought not thus to exhort in an authoritative manner. There is a great deal of difference between teaching as a father amongst a company of children, and counselling in a *brotherly* way, as the children may kindly counsel and admonish one another. Those that are mere brethren, ought not to assume authority in exhorting, though one may be better, and have more experience than another. Laymen ought not to exhort as

though they were the ambassadors or messengers of Christ, as ministers do; nor should they exhort and warn and charge *in his name*, according to the ordinary import of such an expression, when applied to teaching: indeed in one sense, a Christian ought to do every thing he does in religion in the name of Christ, i. e., he ought to act in a dependence on him as his head and mediator, and do all for his glory: but the expression as it is usually understood when applied to teaching or exhorting, is speaking in Christ's stead, and as having a message from him.

Persons may clothe themselves with authority in speaking, either by the authoritative words they make use of, or in the manner, and authoritative air of their speaking: though some may think that this latter is a matter of indifferency, or at least of small importance, yet there is indeed a great deal in it: a person may go much out of his place, and be guilty of a great degree of assuming, in the manner of his speaking those words, which as they might be spoken, might be proper for him: the same words spoken in a different manner, may express what is very diverse: doubtless there may be as much hurt in the manner of a person's speaking, as there may be in his looks; but the wise man tells us, that *a high look is an abomination to the Lord*, Prov. xxi. 4. Again, a man may clothe himself with authority, in the circumstances under which he speaks, as for instance, if he sets himself up as a *public teacher*. Here I would have it observed, that I do not suppose that a person is guilty of this, merely because he speaks in the hearing of many: persons may speak, and speak only in a way of conversation, and yet speak in the hearing of a great number, as they often do in their common conversation about temporal things, at feasts and entertainments, where women as well as others, do converse freely together about worldly things, in the hearing of a considerable number, and it may happen to be in the hearing of a great number, and yet without offence: and if their conversation on such occasions should turn on spiritual things, and they should speak as freely and openly, I do not see why it would not be as harmless. Nor do I think that if besides a great number being present, persons speak with a very earnest and loud voice, this is for them to set up themselves as public teachers, if they do it from no contrivance or premeditated design, or as purposely directing themselves to a congregation or multitude, and not speaking to any that are composed to the solemnity of any public service; but speaking in the time of conversation, or a time when all do freely converse one with another, they express what they then feel, directing themselves to none but those that are near them, and fall in their way, speaking in that earnest and pathetical manner, to which the subject they are speaking of, and the affecting sense of their souls naturally leads them, and as it were constrains them: I say that for persons to do thus, though many happen to hear them, yet it does not appear to me to be a setting themselves up as public teachers: yea, if this be added to these other circumstances, that all this happens to be in a meeting house: I do not think that merely its being in such a place, much alters the case, provided the solemnity of public service and divine ordinances be over, and the solemn assembly broke up, and some stay in the house for mutual religious conversation; provided also that they speak in no authoritative way, but in a humble manner, becoming their degree and station, though they speak very earnestly and pathetically.

Indeed modesty might, in ordinary cases, restrain some persons, as women, and those that are young, from so much as speaking, when a great number are present; at least when some of those present are much their superiors, unless they are spoken to; and yet the case may be so extraordinary, as fully to warrant it. If something very extraordinary happens to persons, or if they are in extraordinary circumstances; as if a person be struck with lightning, in the midst

of a great company, or if he lies a dying, it appears to none any violation of modesty, for him to speak freely, before those that are much his superiors. I have seen some women and children in such circumstances, on religious accounts, that it has appeared to me no more a transgressing the laws of humility and modesty, for them to speak freely, let who will be present, than if they were dying.

But then may a man be said to set up himself as a public teacher, when he in a set speech, of design, directs himself to a multitude, either in the meeting-house or elsewhere, as looking that they should compose themselves to attend to what he has to say; and much more when this is a contrived and premeditated thing, without any thing like a constraint, by any extraordinary sense or affection that he is then under; and more still, when meetings are appointed on purpose to hear lay persons exhort, and they take it as their business to be speakers while they expect that others should come, and compose themselves, and attend as hearers; when private Christians take it upon them in private meetings, to act as the masters or presidents of the assembly, and accordingly from time to time to teach and exhort the rest, this has the appearance of authoritative teaching.

When private Christians, that are no more than mere brethren, exhort and admonish one another, it ought to be in a humble manner, rather by way of entreaty than with authority; and the more according as the station of persons is lower. Thus it becomes women, and those that are young, ordinarily to be at a greater distance from any appearance of authority in speaking than others: thus much at least is evident by that in 1 Tim. ii. 9, 11, 12.

That lay persons ought not to exhort one another as clothed with authority, is a general rule; but it cannot justly be supposed to extend to heads of families in their own families. Every Christian family is a little church, and the heads of it are its authoritative teachers and governors. Nor can it extend to school-masters among their scholars; and some other cases might perhaps be mentioned, that ordinary discretion will distinguish, where a man's circumstances do properly clothe him with authority, and render it fit and suitable for him to counsel and admonish others in an authoritative manner.

2. No man but only a minister that is duly appointed to that sacred calling, ought to follow teaching and exhorting *as a calling*, or so as to neglect that which is his *proper calling*.—An having the office of a teacher in the church of God implies two things:

1. A being invested with the *authority* of a teacher; and,

2. A being called to the *business* of a teacher, to make it the business of his life.

Therefore that man that is not a minister, that takes either of these upon him, invades the office of a minister. Concerning assuming the authority of a minister I have spoken already. But if a layman does not assume authority in his teaching, yet if he forsakes his proper calling, or doth so at least in a great measure, and spends his time in going about from house to house, to counsel and exhort, he goes beyond his line, and violates Christian rules. Those that have the office of teachers or exhorters, have it for their calling, and should make it their business, as a business proper to their office; and none should make it their business but such.—Rom. xii. 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the proportion of faith. For as we have many members, in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we being many, are one

body in Christ. He that teacheth, let him wait on teaching, or he that exhorteth, on exhortation." 1 Cor. xii. 29, "Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers?" 1 Cor. vii. 20, "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called." 1 Thes. iv. 11, "And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you."

It will be a very dangerous thing for laymen, in either of these respects, to invade the office of a minister; if this be common among us we shall be in danger of having a stop put to the word of God, and the ark's turning aside from us, before it comes to mount Zion, and of God's making a breach upon us; as of old there was an unhappy stop put to the joy of the congregation of Israel, in bringing up the ark of God, because others carried it besides the Levites: and therefore, David, when the error was found out, says, 1 Chron. xv. 2, "None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites only; for them hath the Lord chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto him forever." And because one presumed to touch the ark that was not of the sons of Aaron, therefore, the Lord made a breach upon them, and covered their day of rejoicing with a cloud in his anger.

Before I dismiss this head of lay exhorting, I would take notice of three things relating to it, upon which there ought to be a restraint.

1. Speaking in the time of the solemn worship of God, as public prayer, singing, or preaching, or administration of the sacrament of the holy supper; or any duty of social worship: this should not be allowed. I know it will be said, that in some cases, when persons are exceedingly affected, they cannot help it; and I believe so too: but then I also believe, and know by experience, that there are several things that contribute to that inability, besides merely and absolutely the sense of divine things they have upon their hearts. Custom and example, or the thing's being allowed, have such an influence, that they actually help to make it impossible for persons under strong affections to avoid speaking. If it was disallowed, and persons at the time that they were thus disposed to break out, had this apprehension, that it would be a very unbecoming, shocking thing for them so to do, it would be a help to them, as to their ability to avoid it: their inability arises from their strong and vehement disposition; and so far as that disposition is from a good principle, it would be weakened by the coming in of this thought to their minds, viz., "What I am going to do, will be for the dishonor of Christ and religion:" and so that inward vehemence, that pushed them forward to speak, would fall, and they would be enabled to avoid it. This experience confirms.

2. There ought to be a moderate restraint on the loudness of persons talking under high affections; for if there be not, it will grow natural and unavoidable for persons to be louder and louder, without any increase of their inward sense; until it becomes natural to them, at last, to scream and halloo to almost every one they see in the streets, when they are much affected: but this is certainly a thing very improper, and what has no tendency to promote religion. The man Christ Jesus, when he was upon earth, had doubtless as great a sense of the infinite greatness and importance of eternal things, and the worth of souls, as any have now-a-days; but there is not the least appearance in his history, of his taking any such course, or manner of exhorting others.

3. There should also be some restraint on the abundance of person's talk, under strong affections; for if persons give themselves an unbounded liberty, to talk just so much as they feel an inclination to, they will increase and abound more and more in talk, beyond the proportion of their sense or affection; until

at length it will become ineffectual on those that near them, and by the commonness of their abundant talk, they will defeat their own end.

One thing more, I would take notice of before I conclude this part, is the mismanagement that has been in some places of the duty of singing praises to God. I believe it to have been one fruit of the extraordinary degrees of the sweet and joyful influences of the Spirit of God that have been lately given, that there has appeared such a disposition to abound in that duty, and frequently to fall into this divine exercise; not only in appointed solemn meetings, but when Christians occasionally meet together at each other's houses. But the mismanagement I have respect to, is the getting into a way of performing it, without almost any appearance of that reverence and solemnity with which all visible, open acts of divine worship ought to be attended; it may be two or three in a room singing hymns of praise to God, others that are present talking at the same time, others about their work, with little more appearance of regard to what is doing, than if some were only singing a common song, for their amusement and diversion. There is danger, if such things are continued, of its coming to that by degrees, that a mere nothing be made of this duty, to the great violation of the third commandment.—Let Christians abound as much as they will in this holy, heavenly exercise, in God's house and in their own houses; but when it is performed, let it be performed as a holy act, wherein they have immediately and visibly to do with God.—When any social open act of devotion, or solemn worship of God is performed, God should be reverenced as visibly present, by those that are present. As we would not have the ark of God depart from us, nor provoke God to make a breach upon us, we should take heed that we handle the ark with reverence.

With respect to companies singing in the streets, going to, or coming from, the place of public worship, I would humbly offer my thoughts in the following particulars.

1. The rule of Christ concerning *putting new wine into old bottles*, does undoubtedly take place in things of this nature, supposing it to be a thing that in itself is good, but not essential, and not particularly enjoined or forbidden. For things, so very new and uncommon, and of so open and public a nature, to be suddenly introduced and set up and practised, in many parts of the country, without the matter's being so much as first proposed to any public consideration, or giving any opportunity for the people of God to weigh the matter, or to consider any reasons that might be offered to support it, is putting new wine into old bottles with a witness; as if it were with no other design than to burst them directly. Nothing else can be expected to be the consequence of this, than uproar and confusion, and great offence, and unhappy mischievous disputes even among the children of God themselves: not that that which is good in itself, and is new, ought to be forborne, until there is nobody that will dislike it; but it ought to be forborne until the visible church of God is so prepared for it, at least, that there is a probability that it will not do more hurt than good, or hinder the work of God more than promote it; as is most evident from Christ's rule, and the apostles' practice. If it be brought in, when the country is so unprepared, that the shock and surprise on persons' minds, and the contention and prejudice against religion, that it is like to be an occasion of, will do more to hinder religion, than the practice of it is like to do to promote it, then the fruit is picked before it is ripe. And indeed, such a hasty endeavor to introduce such an innovation, supposing it to be good in itself, is the likeliest way to retard the effectual introduction of it; it will hinder its being extensively introduced, much more than it will promote it, and so will defeat its own end. But,

2. As to the thing itself, if a considerable part of a congregation have occasion to go in company together to a place of public worship, and they should join together in singing praises to God, as they go, I confess, that after long consideration, and endeavoring to view the thing every way, with the utmost diligence and impartiality I am capable of, I cannot find any valid objection against it. As to the common objection from Matt. vi. 5, "And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men;" it is strong against a single person's singing in the streets, or in the meeting-house, by himself, as offering to God personal worship, but as it is brought against a considerable company, their thus publicly worshipping God, it appears to me to have no weight at all; to be sure, it is of no more force against a company's thus praising God in the streets, than against their praising him in the synagogue or meeting-house, for the streets and the synagogues are both put together in these words of our Saviour, as parallel in the case that he had respect to. It is evident that Christ speaks of personal, and not public worship. If to sing in the streets be ostentatious, then it must be because it is a public place, and it cannot be done there without being very open; but it is no more public than the synagogue or meeting-house is when full of people. Some worship is in its nature private, as that which is proper to particular persons, or families, or private societies, and has respect to their particular concerns: but that which I now speak of, is performed under no other notion than a part of God's public worship, without any relation to any private, separate society, or any chosen or picked number, and in which every visible Christian has equal liberty to join, if it be convenient for him, and he has a disposition, as in the worship that is performed in the meeting-house.

When persons are going to the house of public worship, to serve God there with the assembly of his people, they are upon no other design than that of putting public honor upon God, that is the business they go from home upon, and even in their walking the streets on this errand, they appear in a public act of respect to God; and therefore if they go in company with public praise, it is not a being public when they ought to be private. It is one part of the beauty of public worship, that it be *very public;* the more public it is, the more open honor it puts upon God; and especially is it beautiful in that part of public worship, viz., *public praise:* for the very notion of public praising of God, is to declare abroad his glory, to publish his praise, to make it known, and proclaim it aloud, as is evident by innumerable expressions of Scripture. It is fit that God's honor should not be concealed, but made known in the great congregation, and proclaimed before the sun, and upon the house-tops, before kings, and all nations, and that his praises should be heard to the utmost ends of the earth.

I suppose none will condemn singing God's praises, merely because it is performed in the open air, and not in a close place: and if it may be performed by a company in the open air, doubtless they may do it moving, as well as standing still. So the children of Israel praised God, when they went to mount Zion, with the ark of God; and so the multitude praised Christ, when they entered with him into Jerusalem, a little before his passion; and so the children of Israel were wont, from year to year, to go up to Jerusalem, when they went in companies, from all parts of the land, three times in the year, when they often used to manifest the engagedness of their minds, by travelling all night, and manifested their joy and gladness, by singing praises, with great decency and beauty, as they went towards God's holy mountain; as is evident by Isa. xxx. 29: "Ye shall have a song, as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept, and glad

ness of heart; as when one goeth with a pipe, to come into the mountain of the Lord, to the mighty one of Israel." And Psal. xlii. 4, "When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me; for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holy day." Psal. c. 4, "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise." When God's people are going to his house, the occasion is so joyful to a Christian in a lively frame (the language of whose heart is, *Come, let us go up to the house of the Lord*, and who is glad when it is so said to him), that the duty of singing praises seems to be peculiarly beautiful on such an occasion. So that if the state of the country was ripe for it, and it should be so that there should be frequent occasion for a considerable part of the congregation to go together to the places of public worship, and there was in other respects a proportionable appearance of fervency of devotion, it appears to me that it would be ravishingly beautiful, if such things were practised all over the land, and would have a great tendency to enliven, animate, and rejoice the souls of God's saints, and greatly to propagate vital religion. I believe the time is coming when the world will be full of such things.

3. It seems to me to be requisite that there should be the consent of the governing part of the worshipping societies, to which persons have joined themselves, and of which they own themselves a part, in order to the introducing of things in public worship, so new and uncommon, and not essential, nor particularly commanded, into the places where those worshipping societies belong: the peace and union of such societies seem to require it; seeing they have voluntarily united themselves to these worshipping societies, to that end, that they might be one in the affairs of God's public worship, and oblige themselves in covenant to act as brethren and mutual assistants, and members of one body, in those affairs, and all are hereby naturally and necessarily led to be concerned with one another, in matters of religion and God's worship; and seeing that this is a part of the public worship, and worship that must be performed from time to time in the view of the whole, being performed at a time when they are meeting together for mutual assistance in worship, and therefore that which all must unavoidably be in some measure concerned in, so at least as to show their approbation and consent, or open dislike and separation from them in it; I say, it being thus, charity and a regard to the union and peace of such societies, seems to require a consent of the governing part, in order to the introducing of anything of this nature; (unless they think those societies unworthy that they should be joined to them any longer, and so first renounce them, as the worshipping societies of which they are members). Certainly if we are of the spirit of the Apostle Paul, and have his discretion, we shall not set up any such practice without it: he, for the sake of peace, conformed, in things wherein he was not particularly forbidden, to the Jews, when among them; and so when among those that were without the law, conformed to them, wherein he might. To be sure, those go beyond proper limits, who, coming from abroad, do immediately of their own heads, in a strange place, set up such a new and uncommon practice, among a people.

In introducing any thing of this nature among a people, their minister especially ought to be consulted, and his voice taken, as long as he is owned for their minister. Ministers are pastors of worshipping societies, and their heads and guides in the affairs of public worship. They are called in Scripture *those that rule over them*, and their people are commanded *to obey them, because they watch for their souls as those that must give account*. If it belongs to these

shepherds and rulers to direct and guide the flock in any thing at all, it belongs to them so to do in the circumstantials of their public worship.

Thus I have taken particular notice of many of those things that have appeared to me to be amiss, in the management of our religious concerns, relating to the present revival of religion, and have taken liberty freely to express my thoughts upon them. Upon the whole it appears manifest to me, that things have as yet never been set a going in their right channel; if they had, and means had been blessed in proportion as they have been now, this work would have so prevailed, as before this time to have carried all before it, and have triumphed over New England as its conquest.

The devil, in driving things to these extremes, besides the present hinderance of the work of God, has, I believe, had in view a twofold mischief hereafter, in the issue of things; one with respect to those that are more cold in religion; to carry things to such an extreme, that people in general, at length, having their eyes opened, by the great excess, and seeing that things must needs be wrong, he might take the advantage to tempt them entirely to reject the whole work, as being all nothing but delusion and distraction. And another is with respect to those that have been very warm and zealous, of God's own children, that have been out of the way, to sink them down in unbelief and darkness. The time is coming, I doubt not, when the bigger part of them will be convinced of their errors; and then probably the devil will take advantage to lead them into a dreadful wilderness, and to puzzle and confound them about their own experiences, and the experiences of others; and to make them to doubt of many things that they ought not to doubt of, and even to tempt them with atheistical thoughts. I believe if all true Christians all over the land, should now at once have their eyes opened, fully to see all their errors, it would seem for the present to damp religion: the dark thoughts, that it would at first be an occasion of, and the inward doubts, difficulties, and conflicts that would rise in their souls, would deaden their lively affections and joys, and would cause an appearance of a present decay of religion. But yet it would do God's saints great good in their latter end; it would fit them for more spiritual and excellent experiences, more humble and heavenly love, and unmixed joys, and would greatly tend to a more powerful, extensive, and durable prevalence of vital piety.

I do not know but we shall be in danger by and by, after our eyes are fully opened to see our errors, to go to contrary extremes. The devil has driven the pendulum far beyond its proper point of rest; and when he has carried it to the utmost length that he can, and it begins by its own weight to swing back, he probably will set in, and drive it with the utmost fury the other way; and so give us no rest: and if possible prevent our settling in a proper medium. What a poor, blind, weak, and miserable creature is man, at his best estate! We are like poor helpless sheep; the devil is too subtle for us: what is our strength! What is our wisdom! How ready are we to go astray! How easily are we drawn aside, into innumerable snares, while we in the mean time are bold and confident, and doubt not but that we are right and safe! We are foolish sheep, in the midst of subtle serpents and cruel wolves, and do not know it. Oh! how unfit are we to be left to ourselves! and how much do we stand in need of the wisdom, the power, the condescension, patience, forgiveness, and gentleness of our good Shepherd

PART V.

Showing positively, what ought to be done to promote this Work.

In considering of means and methods for promoting this glorious work of God, I have already observed, in some instances wherein there has been needless objecting and complaining, and have also taken notice of many things amiss, that ought to be amended: I now proceed in the

Third and last place, to show positively, what ought to be done, or what courses (according to my humble opinion) ought to be taken to promote this work. The obligations that all are under, with one consent, to do their utmost, and the great danger of neglecting it, were observed before. I hope that some, upon reading what was said under that head, will be ready to say, What shall we do? To such readers I would now offer my thoughts, in answer to such an inquiry.

And that which I think we ought to set ourselves about in the first place, is to remove stumbling blocks. When God is revealed as about to come, gloriously to set up his kingdom in the world, this is proclaimed, *Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert an highway for our God*, Isa. xl. 3.—And again, Isa. lvii. 14, "Cast ye up, cast ye up; prepare the way; take up the stumbling-block out of the way of my people." And chap. lxii. 10, "Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones."

And in order to this, there must be a great deal done at confessing of faults, on both sides: for undoubtedly many and great are the faults that have been committed, in the jangling and confusions, and mixtures of light and darkness, that have been of late. There is hardly any duty more contrary to our corrupt dispositions, and mortifying to the pride of man; but it must be done. Repentance of faults is, in a peculiar manner, a proper duty, when the kingdom of heaven is at hand, or when we especially expect or desire that it should come; as appears by John the Baptist's preaching. And if God does now loudly call upon us to repent, then he also calls upon us to make proper manifestations of our repentance. I am persuaded that those that have openly opposed this work, or have from time to time spoken lightly of it, cannot be excused in the sight of God, without openly confessing their fault therein; especially if they be ministers. If they have any way, either directly or indirectly, opposed the work, or have so behaved, in their public performances or private conversation, as has prejudiced the minds of their people against the work, if hereafter they shall be convinced of the goodness and divinity of what they have opposed, they ought by no means to palliate the matter, and excuse themselves, and pretend that they always thought so, and that it was only such and such imprudences that they objected against; but they ought openly to declare their conviction, and condemn themselves for what they have done; for it is Christ that they have spoken against, in speaking lightly of, and prejudicing others against this work; yea, worse than that, it is the Holy Ghost. And though they have done it ignorantly, and in unbelief, yet when they find out who it is that they have opposed, undoubtedly God will hold them bound publicly to confess it.

And on the other side, if those that have been zealous to promote the work, have in any of the forementioned instances, openly gone much out of the way

and done that which is contrary to Christian rules, whereby they have openly injured others, or greatly violated good order, and so done that which has wounded religion, they must publicly confess it, and humble themselves, as they would gather out the stones, and prepare the way of God's people. They who have laid great stumbling-blocks in others' way, by their *open transgression*, are bound to remove them, by their *open repentance*.

Some probably will be ready to object against this, that the opposers will take advantage by this to behave themselves insolently, and to insult both them and religion. And indeed, to the shame of some, they have taken advantage by such things; as of the good spirit that Mr. Whitefield showed in his retractations, and some others. But if there are some imbittered enemies of religion, that stand ready to improve every thing to its disadvantage, yet that ought not to hinder doing an enjoined Christian duty; though it be in the manifestation of humility and repentance, after a fault openly committed. To stand it out in a visible impenitence of a real fault, to avoid such an inconvenience, is to do evil, to prevent evil. And besides, the danger of an evil consequence is much greater on the other side: to commit sin, and then stand in it, is what will give the enemy the greatest advantage. For Christians to act like Christians, in openly humbling themselves, when they have openly offended, in the end brings the greatest honor to Christ and religion; and in this way are persons most likely to have God appear for them.

Again, at such a day as this, God does especially call his people to the exercise of extraordinary meekness and mutual forbearance: for at such a time, Christ appears as it were coming in his kingdom, which calls for great moderation in our behavior towards all men; as is evident, Phil. iv. 5, "Let your moderation be known unto all men: the Lord is at hand." The awe of the divine majesty that appears present or approaching, should dispose us to it, and deter us from the contrary. For us to be judging one another, and behaving with fierceness and bitterness, one towards another, when He who is the searcher of all hearts, to whom we must all give an account, appears so remarkably present, is exceeding unsuitable. Our business, at such a time, should be at home, searching ourselves, and condemning ourselves, and taking heed to our own behavior. If there be glorious prosperity to the church of God approaching, those that are the most meek, will have the largest share in it; for when Christ *rides forth, in his glory and his majesty*, it is *because of truth, meekness, and righteousness*, Psal. xlv. 3, 4. And when God remarkably *arises, to execute judgment*, it is *to save all the meek of the earth*, Psal. lxxvi. 9. And it is *the meek*, that *shall increase their joy in the Lord*, Isa. xxix. 19. And when the time comes, that God will give this lower world into the hands of his saints, it is *the meek that shall inherit the earth*, Psal. xxxvii. 11, and Matt. v. 9, "But with the froward, God will show himself unsavory."

Those, therefore, that have been zealous for this work, and have greatly erred and been injurious with their zeal, ought not to be treated with bitterness. There is abundant reason to think, that most of them are the dear children of God, for whom Christ died; and therefore, that they will see their error. As to those things, wherein we see them to be in an error, we have reason to say of them as the apostle, Philip. iii. 15, "If any are otherwise minded, God shall reveal this unto them." Their errors should not be made use of by us, so much to excite indignation towards them, but should influence all of us, that hope that we are the children of God, to humble ourselves, and become more entirely dependent on the Lord Jesus Christ, when we see those, that are God's own people, so ready to go astray. And those ministers that have been judg-

ed, and injuriously dealt with, will do the part of Christ's disciples, not to judge and revile again, but to receive such injuries with meekness and forbearance, and making a good improvement of them, more strictly examining their hearts and ways, and committing themselves to God. This will be the way to have God vindicate them in his providence, if they belong to him. We have not yet seen the end of things; nor do we know who will be most vindicated, and honored of God, in the issue. Eccles. vii. 8, "Better is the end of a thing, than the beginning thereof; and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit."

Contrary to this mutual meekness, is each party's stigmatizing one another with odious names; as is done in many parts of New England: which tends greatly to widen and perpetuate the breach. Such distinguishing names of reproach, do as it were divide us into two armies, separated, and drawn up in battle array, ready to fight one with another; which greatly hinders the work of God.

And as such an extraordinary time as this, does especially require of us the exercise of a great deal of forbearance, *one towards another;* so there is peculiarly requisite in God's people, the exercise of great patience, in waiting on God, under any special difficulties and disadvantages they may be under, as to the means of grace. The beginning of a revival of religion will naturally and necessarily be attended with a great many difficulties of this nature; many parts of the reviving church will, for a while, be under great disadvantages, by reason of what remains of the old disease, of a general corruption of the visible church. We cannot expect that, after a long time of degeneracy and depravity, in the state of things in the church, things should all come to rights at once; it must be a work of time: and for God's people to be over hasty and violent in such a case, being resolved to have every thing rectified at once, or else forcibly to deliver themselves, by breaches and separations, is the way to hinder things coming to rights, as they otherwise would, and to keep them back, and the way to break all in pieces. Not but that the case may be such, the difficulty may be so intolerable, as to allow of no delay, and God's people cannot continue in the state wherein they were, without violations of absolute commands of God. But otherwise, though the difficulty may be very great, another course should be taken. God's people should have their recourse directly to the throne of grace, to represent their difficulties before the great Shepherd of the sheep, that has the care of all the affairs of his church; and when they have done, they should wait patiently upon him: if they do so, they may expect that in his time he will appear for their deliverance: but if, instead of that, they are impatient, and take the work into their own hands, they will bewray their want of faith, and will dishonor God, and cannot have such reason to hope that Christ will appear for them, as they have desired, but have reason to fear, that he will leave them to manage their affairs for themselves, as well as they can: when otherwise, if they had waited on Christ patiently, continuing still instant in prayer, they might have had him appearing for them, much more effectually to deliver them. *He that believeth shall not make haste;* and it is for those that are found patiently waiting on the Lord, under difficulties, that he will especially appear, when he comes to do great things for his church, as is evident by Isa. xxx. 18, and chap. xl. at the latter end, and xlix. 23, and Psal. xxxvii. 9, and many other places.

I have somewhere, not long since, met with an exposition of those words of the spouse, that we have several times repeated in the book of Canticles, *I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, that ye stir not up nor awake my love*

until he please, which is the only satisfying exposition that I ever met with; which was to this purpose, viz., that when the church of God is under great difficulties, and in distress, and Christ does not appear for her help, but seems to neglect her, as though he were asleep, God's people, or the daughters of Jerusalem, in such a case, should not show a hasty spirit; and not having patience to wait for Christ to awake for their help, until his time comes, take indirect courses for their own deliverance, and use violent means for their escape, before Christ appears to open the door for them; and so, as it were, *stir up, and awake Christ*, before his time. When the church is in distress, and God seems not to appear for her in his providence, he is very often represented in Scripture, as being asleep; as Christ was asleep in the ship, when the disciples were tossed by the storm, and the ship covered with waves: and God's appearing afterwards for his people's help, is represented as his awaking out of sleep. Psal. vii. 6, and xxxv. 23, and xliv. 23, and lix. 4, and lxxiii. 20. Christ has an appointed time for his thus awaking out of sleep: and his people ought to wait upon him; and not, in an impatient fit, stir him up before his time. It is worthy to be observed how strict this charge is, given to the daughters of Jerusalem, which is repeated three times over in the book of Canticles, chap. ii. 7, and iii. 5, and viii. 4. In the 2d chapter and six first verses, is represented the support Christ gives his church, while she is in a suffering state, *as the lily among thorns:* in the 7th verse is represented her patience in waiting for Christ, to appear for her deliverance, when she charges the daughters of Jerusalem, not to stir up, nor awake her love until he please, *by the roes, and the hinds of the field;* which are creatures of a gentle, harmless nature, are not beasts of prey, do not devour one another, do not fight with their enemies, but fly from them; and are of a pleasant, loving nature, Prov. v. 19. In the next verse, we see the church's success, in this way of waiting under sufferings, with meekness and patience; Christ soon awakes, speedily appears, and swiftly comes: *the voice of my beloved! Behold, he cometh, leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills!*

What has been mentioned hitherto, has relation to the behavior we are obliged to, as we would prevent the hinderances of the work; but besides these, there are things that must be done, more directly to advance it. And here, it concerns every one, in the first place, to look into his own heart, and see to it that he be a partaker of the benefits of the work himself, and that it be promoted in his own soul. Now is a most glorious opportunity for the good of souls. It is manifestly with respect to a time of great revival of religion in the world, that we have that gracious, earnest, and moving invitation proclaimed, in the 55th of Isaiah. *Ho, every one that thirsteth!* &c., as is evident by what precedes in the foregoing chapter, and what follows in the close of this. Here, in the 6th verse, it is said, "Seek ye the Lord, while he may be found; call upon him, while he is near. And it is with special reference to such a time, that Christ proclaims as he does, Rev. xxi. 6, "I will give unto him that is athirst, of the fountain of the water of life freely." And chap. xxii. 17, "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come; and let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." And it seems to be with reference to such a time, which is typified by the *feast of tabernacles*, that Jesus, at that feast, stood and cried, as we have an account, John vii. 37, 38, "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." And it is with special reference to God's freeness and readiness to bestow grace at such

a time, that it is said in Isa. lx. 11, of the spiritual *Jerusalem, Thy gates shall be open continually, they shall not be shut day nor night.*

And though I judge not those that have opposed this work, and would not have others judge them, yet, if any such shall happen to read this treatise, I would take the liberty to entreat them to leave off concerning themselves so much about others, and look into their own souls, and see to it that they are the subjects of a true, saving work of the Spirit of God. If they have reason to think they never have been, or it be but a very doubtful hope that they have, then how can they have any heart to be busily and fiercely engaged about the mistakes and the supposed false hopes of others? And I would now beseech those that have hitherto been something inclining to Arminian principles, seriously to weigh the matter with respect to this work, and consider, whether, if the Scriptures are the word of God, the work that has been described in the first part of this treatise, must not needs be, as to the substance of it, the work of God, and the flourishing of that religion, that is taught by Christ and his apostles; and whether any good medium can be found where a man can rest, with any stability, between owning this work, and being a Deist; and also to consider whether or no, if it be indeed so, that this be the work of God, it does not entirely overthrow their scheme of religion; and therefore, whether it does not infinitely concern them, as they would be partakers of eternal salvation, to relinquish their scheme. Now is a good time for Arminians to change their principles. I would now, as one of the friends of this work, humbly invite them to come and join with us, and be on our side: and if I had the authority of Moses, I would say to them as he did to Hobab, Numb. x. 29, "We are journeying unto the place, of which the Lord said, I will give it you; come thou with us; and we will do thee good: for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel."

As the benefit and advantage of the good improvement of such a season, is extraordinary great; so the danger of neglecting, and misimproving it, is proportionably great. It is abundantly evident by the Scripture, that as a time of great outpouring of the Spirit, is a time of great favor to those that are partakers of the blessing; so it is always a time of remarkable vengeance to others. So in Isa. lxi. 2, the same that is called, *the acceptable year of the Lord*, is called also, *the day of vengeance of our God.* So it was amongst the Jews in the apostles' days: the apostle in 2 Cor. vi. 2, says of that time, that it was *the accepted time, and day of salvation;* and Christ says of the same time, Luke xxi. 22, "These are the days of vengeance." At the same time that the blessings of the kingdom of heaven were given to some, there was an *axe laid at the root of the trees, that those that did not bear fruit, might be hewn down and cast into the fire*, Matt. iii. 9, 10, 11. Then was glorified, both the goodness and severity of God, in a remarkable manner. Rom. xi. 22. The harvest and the vintage go together: at the same time that the earth is reaped, and God's elect are gathered into the garner of God, *the angel that has power over fire, thrusts in his sickle, and gathers the clusters of the vine of the earth, and casts it into the great wine-press of the wrath of God*, Rev. xiv. at the latter end. So it is foretold, that at the beginning of the glorious times of the Christian church, at the same time that *the hand of the Lord is known towards his servants, so shall his indignation, towards his enemies*, Isa. lxvi. 14. So when that glorious morning shall appear, wherein *the sun of righteousness shall arise, to the elect, with healing in his wings, the day shall burn as an oven to the wicked*, Mal iv. 1, 2, 3. There is no time like such a time, for the increase of guilt, and treasuring up wrath, and desperate hardening of the heart, if men stand it out; which is the most awful judgment, and fruit of divine wrath, that can be inflicted on any mortal. So that a

time of great grace, and pouring out of the Spirit, and the fruits of divine mercy, is evermore also a time of great outpouring of something else, viz., divine vengeance, on those that neglect and misimprove such a season.

The state of the present revival of religion, has an awful aspect upon those that are advanced in years. The work has been chiefly amongst those that are young; and comparatively but a few others have been made partakers of it. And indeed, it has commonly been so, when God has begun any great work, for the revival of his church; he has taken the young people, and has cast off the old and stiff-necked generation. There was a remarkable outpouring of the Spirit of God, on the children of Israel in the wilderness, on the younger generation, *their little ones, that they said should be a prey*, the generation that entered into Canaan, with Joshua; which is evident by many things in Scripture. That generation seems to have been the most excellent generation that ever was in the church of Israel. There is no generation of which there is so much good, and so little hurt spoken in Scripture; as might be shown, if it would not be too long. In that generation, that were under twenty years when they went out of Egypt, was that *kindness of youth*, and *love of espousals*, spoken of, Jer ii. 2, 3. But the old generation were passed by, and remained obstinate and stiff-necked, were always murmuring, and would not be convinced by all God's wondrous works that they beheld. God, by his awful judgments that he executed in the wilderness, and the affliction that the people suffered there, convinced and humbled the younger generation, and fitted them for great mercy; as is evident by Deut. ii. 16; but he destroyed the old generation; *he swore in his wrath, that they should not enter into his rest, and their carcasses fell in the wilderness:* when it was a time of great mercy, and pouring out of God's Spirit on their children, it was remarkably a day of vengeance unto them; as appears by the 90th Psalm.—Let the old generation in this land take warning from hence, and take heed that they do not refuse to be convinced, by all God's wonders that he works before their eyes, and that they do not continue forever objecting, and murmuring, and cavilling against the work of God, lest, while God is bringing their children into a land flowing with milk and honey, he should swear in his wrath concerning them, that their carcasses shall fall in the wilderness.

So when God has a design of great mercy to the Jews, in bringing them out of the Babylonish captivity, and returning them to their own land, there was a blessed outpouring of the Spirit upon them in Babylon, to bring them to deep conviction and repentance, and to a spirit of prayer to cry earnestly to God for mercy; which is often spoken of by the prophets: but it was not upon the old generation that were carried captive. The captivity continued just long enough, for that perverse generation to waste away and die in their captivity; at least those of them that were adult persons, when carried captive. The old generation, and heads of families were exceeding obstinate, and would not hearken to the earnest, repeated warnings of the prophet Jeremiah; but he had greater success among the young people; as appears by Jer. vi. 10, 11, "To whom shall I speak and give warning, that they may hear? Behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: behold, the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it. Therefore, I am full of the fury of the Lord; I am weary with holding in; I will pour it out upon the children abroad, and upon the assembly of the young men together; for even the husband with the wife (i. e. the heads of families, and parents of these children) shall be taken, the aged with him that is full of days."—Blessed be God! There are some of the elder people, that have been made partakers of

this work: and those that are most awakened, by these warnings of God's word, and the awful frown of his providence, will be most likely to be made partakers hereafter. It infinitely concerns them to take heed to themselves, that they may be partakers of it; for how dreadful will it be to go to hell, after having spent so many years in doing nothing, but treasure up wrath.

But above all others whatsoever, does it concern us that are ministers, to see to it that we are partakers of this work, or that we have experience of the saving operations of the same Spirit, that is now poured out on the land. How sorrowful and melancholy is the case, when it is otherwise! For one to stand at the head of a congregation of God's people, as representing Christ, and speaking in his stead, and to act the part of a shepherd and guide to a people, in such a state of things, when many are under great awakenings, and many are converted, and many of God's saints are filled with divine light, love, and joy, and to undertake to instruct and lead them all, under all these various circumstances, and to be put to it, continually to play the hypocrite, and force the airs of a saint in preaching, and from time to time in private conversation, and particular dealing with souls, to undertake to judge of their circumstances, to try to talk with those that come to him, as if he knew what they said; to try to talk with persons of experience, as if he knew how to converse with them, and had experience as well as they; to make others believe that he rejoices when others are converted, and to force a pleased and joyful countenance and manner of speech, when there is nothing in the heart, what sorrowful work is here! Oh! how miserably must such a person feel! What a wretched bondage and slavery is this! What pains and how much art must such a minister use to conceal himself! And how weak are his hands! Besides the infinite provocation of the most high God, and displeasure of his Lord and master, that he incurs, by continuing a secret enemy to him in his heart, in such circumstances. I think there is a great deal of reason, from the Scripture, to conclude that no sort of men in the world will be so low in hell, as ungodly ministers: every thing that is spoken of in Scripture, as that which aggravates guilt, and heightens divine wrath, meets in them; however some particular persons, of other sorts, may be more guilty than some of these.

And what great disadvantages are unconverted ministers under, to oppose any irregularities, or imprudences, or intemperate zeal, that they may see in those that are the children of God, when they are conscious to themselves that they have no zeal at all! If enthusiasm and wildness comes in like a flood, what poor, weak instruments are such ministers to withstand it! With what courage can they open their mouths, when they look inward, and consider how it is with them!

We that are ministers not only have need of some true experience of the saving influence of the Spirit of God upon our heart, but we need a double portion of the Spirit of God at such a time as this: we had need to be as full of light, as a glass is that is held out in the sun; and with respect to love and zeal, we had need at this day, to be like the angels that are a flame of fire. The state of the times extremely requires a fulness of the divine Spirit in ministers, and we ought to give ourselves no rest until we have obtained it. And in order to this, I should think ministers, above all persons, ought to be much in secret prayer and fasting, and also much in praying and fasting one with another. It seems to me it would be becoming the circumstances of the present day, if ministers in a neighborhood would often meet together, and spend days in fasting, and fervent prayer, among themselves, earnestly seeking for those extraordinary supplies of divine grace from heaven, that we need at this day: and also,

if on their occasional visits one to another, instead of spending away their time in sitting and smoking, and in diverting, or worldly, unprofitable conversation, telling news, and making their remarks on this and the other trifling subject, they would spend their time in praying together, and singing praises, and religious conference. How much do many of the common people shame many of us that are in the work of the ministry, in these respects? Surely we do not behave ourselves so much like Christian ministers, and the disciples and ambassadors of Christ, as we ought to do. And while we condemn zealous persons for their doing so much at censuring ministers at this day, it ought not to be without deep reflections upon, and great condemnation of ourselves: for indeed, we do very much to provoke censoriousness, and lay a great temptation before others, to the sin of judging: and if we can prove that those that are guilty of it, do transgress the Scripture rule, yet our indignation should be chiefly against ourselves.

Ministers, at this day in a special manner, should act as fellow-helpers, in their great work. It should be seen that they are animated and engaged, and exert themselves with one heart and soul, and with united strength, to promote the present glorious revival of religion: and to that end should often meet together, and act in concert. And if it were a common thing in the country, for ministers to join in public exercises, and second one another in their preaching, I believe it would be of great service. I mean that ministers having consulted one another, as to the subjects of their discourses, before they go to the house of God, should there speak two or three of them going, in short discourses, as seconding each other, and earnestly enforcing each other's warnings and counsels. Only such an appearance of united zeal in ministers, would have a great tendency to awaken attention, and much to impress and animate the hearers; as has been found by experience, in some parts of the country.

Ministers should carefully avoid weakening one another's hands. And therefore every thing should be avoided, by which their interest with their people might be diminished, or their union with them broken. On the contrary, if ministers have not forfeited their acceptance in that character, in the visible church, by their doctrine or behavior, their brethren in the ministry ought studiously to endeavor to heighten the esteem and affection of their people towards them, that they may have no temptation to repent their admitting other ministers to come and preach in their pulpits.

Two things that are exceeding needful in ministers, as they would do any great matters, to advance the kingdom of Christ, are *zeal* and *resolution*. The influence and power of these things to bring to pass great effects, is greater than can well be imagined: a man of but an ordinary capacity, will do more with them, than one of ten times the parts and learning without them: more may be done with them in a few days, or at least weeks, than can be done without them, in many years. Those that are possessed of these qualities, commonly carry the day, in almost all affairs. Most of the great things that have been done in the world of mankind, the great revolutions that have been accomplished in the kingdoms and empires of the earth, have been chiefly owing to these things. The very sight or appearance of a thoroughly engaged spirit, together with fearless courage and unyielding resolution, in any person that has undertaken the managing any affair amongst mankind, goes a great way towards accomplishing the effect aimed at. It is evident that the appearance of these things in Alexander, did three times as much towards his conquering the world, as all the blows that he struck. And how much were the great things that Oliver Cromwell did, owing to these things! And the great things that Mr White-

field has done, every where, as he ran through the British dominions (so far as they are owing to means), are very much owing to the appearance of these things, which he is eminently possessed of. When the people see these things apparently in a person, and to a great degree, it awes them, and has a commanding influence upon their minds; it seems to them that they must yield; they naturally fall before them, without standing to contest or dispute the matter; they are conquered as it were by surprise. But while we are cold and heartless, and only go on in a dull manner, in an old formal round, we shall never do any great matters. Our attempts, the appearance of such coldness and irresolution, will not so much as make persons think of yielding: they will hardly be sufficient to put it into their minds; and if it be put in their minds, the appearance of such indifference and cowardice, does as it were call for, and provoke opposition. Our misery is want of zeal and courage; for not only through want of them does all fail that we seem to attempt, but it prevents our attempting any thing very remarkable, for the kingdom of Christ. Hence, oftentimes it has been, that when any thing very considerable, that is new, is proposed to be done, for the advancement of religion, or the public good, many difficulties are found out, that are in the way, and a great many objections are started, and it may be, it is put off from one to another; but nobody does any thing. And after this manner good designs or proposals have oftentimes failed, and have sunk as soon as proposed. Whereas if we had but Mr. Whitefield's zeal and courage, what could not we do, with such a blessing as we might expect?

Zeal and courage will do much in persons of but an ordinary capacity; but especially would they do great things, if joined with great abilities. If some great men, that have appeared in our nation, had been as eminent in divinity, as they were in philosophy, and had engaged in the Christian cause, with as much zeal and fervor, as some others have done, and with a proportionable blessing of heaven, they would have conquered all Christendom, and turned the world upside down. We have many ministers in the land that do not want for abilities, they are persons of bright parts and learning; they should consider how much is expected, and will be required of them, by their Lord and master, and how much they might do for Christ, and what great honor, and how glorious a reward they might receive, if they had in their hearts a heavenly warmth, and divine heat, proportionable to their light.

With respect to candidates for the ministry, I will not undertake particularly to determine, what kind of examination or trial they should pass under, in order to their admission to that sacred work: but I think this is evident from the Scripture, that another sort of trial, with regard to their virtue and piety, is requisite, than is required in order to persons being admitted into the visible church. The apostle directs, that *hands be laid suddenly on no man;* but that they should *first be tried*, before they are admitted to the work of the ministry: but it is evident that persons were suddenly admitted, by baptism, into the visible church, from time to time, on their profession of their faith in Christ, without such caution and strictness in their probation. And it seems to me, those would act very unadvisedly, that should enter on that great and sacred work, before they had comfortable satisfaction concerning themselves, that they have had a saving work of God on their souls.

And though it may be thought that I go out of my proper sphere, to intermeddle in the affairs of the colleges, yet I will take the liberty of an Englishman (that speaks his mind freely concerning public affairs) and the liberty of a minister of Christ (who doubtless may speak his mind as freely about things that concern the kingdom of his Lord and master) to give my opinion, in some

things, with respect to those societies; the original and main design of which is to train up persons, and fit them for the work of the ministry. And I would say in general, that it appears to me that care should be taken, some way or other, that those societies should be so regulated, that they should, in fact, be nurseries of piety. Otherwise, they are fundamentally ruined and undone, as to their main design, and most essential end. They ought to be so constituted, that vice and idleness should have no living there: they are intolerable in societies, whose main design is, to train up youth in Christian knowledge and eminent piety, to fit them to be pastors of the flock of the blessed Jesus. I have heretofore had some acquaintance with the affairs of a college, and experience of what belonged to its tuition and government; and I cannot but think that it is practicable enough, so to constitute such societies, that there should be no being there without being virtuous, serious, and diligent. It seems to me to be a reproach to the land, that ever it should be so with our colleges, that instead of being places of the greatest advantages for true piety, one cannot send a child thither, without great danger of his being infected, as to his morals; as it has certainly sometimes been with these societies: it is perfectly intolerable; and any thing should be done, rather than it should be so. If we pretend to have any colleges at all, under any notion of training up youth for the ministry, there should be some way found out, that should certainly prevent its being thus. To have societies for bringing persons up to be ambassadors of Jesus Christ, and to lead souls to heaven, and to have them places of so much infection, is the greatest nonsense and absurdity imaginable.

And, as thorough and effectual care should be taken that vice and idleness are not tolerated in these societies, so certainly the design of them requires, that extraordinary means should be used in them, for training up the students in vital religion, and experimental and practical godliness; so that they should be holy societies, the very place should be as it were sacred: they should be, in the midst of the land, fountains of piety and holiness. There is a great deal of pains taken to teach the scholars human learning; there ought to be as much, and more care, thoroughly to educate them in religion, and lead them to true and eminent holiness. If the main design of these nurseries, is to bring up persons to teach Christ, then it is of the greatest importance that there should be care and pains taken, to bring those that are there educated, to the knowledge of Christ. It has been common in our public prayers, to call these societies, *the schools of the prophets;* and if they are schools, to train up young men to be prophets, certainly there ought to be extraordinary care taken, to train them up to be Christians.

And I cannot see why it is not on all accounts fit and convenient, for the governors and instructors of the colleges, particularly, singly and frequently to converse with the students, about the state of their souls. As is the practice of the Rev. Dr. Doddridge, one of the most noted of the present dissenting ministers in England, who keeps an academy at Northampton, as he himself informs the Rev. Mr. Wadsworth of Hartford, in Connecticut, in a letter dated at Northampton, March 6, 1740—41. The original of which letter I have seen, and have by me an extract of it, sent to me by Mr. Wadsworth; which is as follows:

"Through the divine goodness, I have every year the pleasure to see some plants taken out of my nursery, and set in neighboring congregations; where they generally settle with a unanimous consent, and that to a very remarkable degree, in some very large, and once divided congregations. A circumstance, in which I own and adore the hand of a wise and gracious God; and cannot

but look upon it as a token for good. I have at present, a greater proportion of pious and ingenious youth under my care, than I ever before had. So that I hope the church may reasonably expect some considerable relief from hence, if God spare their lives a few years, and continue to them those gracious assistances, which he has hitherto mercifully imparted. I will not, Sir, trouble you at present, with a large account of my method of academical education: only would observe, that I think it of vast importance, to instruct them carefully in the Scriptures; and not only endeavor to establish them in the great truths of Christianity, but to labor to promote their practical influence on their hearts. For which purpose I frequently converse with each of them alone, and conclude the conversation with prayer. This does indeed take up a great deal of time; but I bless God it is amply repaired, in the pleasure I have, in seeing my labor is not in vain in the Lord."

There are some that are not ministers, nor are concerned immediately in those things that appertain to their office, or in the education of persons for it, that are under great advantages to promote such a glorious work as this. Some laymen, though it be not their business publicly to exhort and teach, yet are, in some respects, under greater advantage to encourage and forward this work, than ministers. As particularly great men, or men that are high in honor and influence. How much might such do, to encourage religion, and open the way for it to have free course, and bear down opposition, if they were but inclined! There is commonly a certain unhappy shyness, in great men, with respect to religion, as though they were ashamed of it, or at least ashamed to do very much at it; whereby they dishonor and doubtless greatly provoke the King of kings, and very much wound religion among the common people. They are careful of their honor, and seem to be afraid of appearing openly forward and zealous in religion, as though it were what would debase their character, and expose them to contempt. But in this day of bringing up the ark, they ought to be like David, that great king of Israel, who *made himself vile* before the ark; and as he was the highest in honor and dignity, among God's people, so thought it became him to appear foremost, in the zeal and activity he manifested on that occasion; thereby animating and encouraging the whole congregation to praise the Lord, and rejoice before him, with all their might: and though it diminished him in the eyes of scoffing Michal, yet it did not at all abate the honor and esteem of the congregation of Israel, but advanced it; as appears by 2 Sam. vi. 22.

Rich men have a talent in their hands, in the disposal and improvement of which, they might very much promote such a work as this, if they were so disposed. They are far beyond others under advantage to do good, and lay up for themselves treasures in heaven. What a thousand pities is it, that for want of a heart, they commonly have no share at all there, but heaven is peopled mostly with the poor of this world? One would think that our rich men, that call themselves Christians, might devise some notable things to do with their money, to advance the kingdom of their professed Redeemer, and the prosperity of the souls of men, at this time of such extraordinary advantage for it. It seems to me, that in this age, most of us have but very narrow, penurious notions of Christianity, as it respects our use and disposal of our temporal goods.

The primitive Christians had not such notions: they were trained up by the apostles in another way. God has greatly distinguished some of the inhabitants of New England from others, in the abundance that he has given them of the good things of this life. If they could now be persuaded to lay out some considerable part of that which God has given them for the honor of God, and lay it up in heaven, instead of spending it for their own honor, or laying it up for

their posterity, they would not repent of it afterwards. How liberally did the heads of the tribes contribute to their wealth, at the setting up the tabernacle, though it was in a barren wilderness! These are the days of the erecting the tabernacle of God amongst us. We have a particular account how the goldsmiths and the merchants helped to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, Neh. iii. 32. The days are coming spoken of in Scripture, and I believe not very far off, when the sons of *Zion shall come from far, bringing their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the Lord their God, and to the Holy One of Israel;* and when the merchants of the earth shall trade for Christ, more than for themselves, and *their merchandise and hire shall be holiness to the Lord, and shall not be treasured, or laid up for posterity, but shall be for them that dwell before the Lord, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing;* and when *the ships of Tarshish shall bring* the wealth of the distant parts of the earth, *to the place of God's sanctuary, and to make the place of his feet glorious;* and *the abundance of the sea shall be converted to the use of God's church, and she shall suck the milk of the Gentiles, and suck the breasts of kings.* The days are coming, when the great and rich men of the world *shall bring their honor and glory into the church,* and shall, as it were, strip themselves, to spread their garments under Christ's feet, as he enters triumphantly into Jerusalem; and when those that will not do so shall have no glory, and their silver and gold shall be cankered, and their garments moth eaten; for the saints shall then inherit the earth, and they shall reign on earth, and those that honor God he will honor, and those that despise him shall be lightly esteemed.

If some of our rich men would give one quarter of their estates to promote this work, they would act a little as if they were designed for the kingdom of heaven, and a little as rich men will act by and by, that shall be partakers of the spiritual wealth and glories of that kingdom.

Great things might be done for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ, at this day, by those that have ability, by establishing funds, for the support and propagation of religion; by supporting some that are eminently qualified with gifts and grace, in preaching the gospel in certain parts of the country, that are more destitute of the means of grace; in searching out children, of promising abilities, and their hearts full of love to Christ, but of poor families (as doubtless there are such now in the land), and bringing them up for the ministry; and in distributing books, that are remarkably fitted to promote vital religion, and have a great tendency to advance this work; or if they would only bear the trouble, expense, and loss of sending such books into various parts of the land, to be sold, it might be an occasion that ten times so many of those books should be bought, or otherwise would be; and in establishing and supporting schools, in poor towns and villages; which might be done on such a foundation, as not only to bring up children in common learning, but also might very much tend to their conviction and conversion, and being trained up in vital piety; and doubtless something might be done this way, in old towns, and more populous places, that might have a great tendency to the flourishing of religion in the rising generation.

But I would now proceed to mention some things, that ought to be done, at such a day as this, that concern all in general.

And here, the first thing I shall mention, is, *fasting and prayer.* It seems to me, that the circumstances of the present work do loudly call God's people to abound in this; whether they consider the experience God has lately given them, of the worth of his presence, and of the blessed fruits of the effusions of his Spirit, to excite them to pray for the continuance and increase, and greater

extent of such blessings; or whether they consider the great encouragement God has lately given them, to pray for the outpourings of his Spirit, and the carrying on this work, by the great manifestations he has lately made, of the freeness and riches of his grace; and how much there is, in what we have seen of the glorious works of God's power and grace, to put us in mind of the yet greater things of this nature, that he has spoken of in his word, and to excite our longings for those things, and hopes of their approach; or whether we consider the great opposition that Satan makes against this work, and the many difficulties with which it is clogged, and the distressing circumstances that some parts of God's church in this land are under at this day, on one account and another.

So is God's will, through this wonderful grace, that the prayers of his saints should be one great and principal means of carrying on the designs of Christ's kingdom in the world.—When God has something very great to accomplish for his church, it is his will, that there should precede it, the extraordinary prayers of his people; as is manifest by Ezek. xxxvi. 37, "I will yet, for this, be inquired of, by the house of Israel, to do it for them;" together with the context. And it is revealed that, when God is about to accomplish great things for his church, he will begin by remarkably pouring out the Spirit of grace and supplication. Zech. xii. 10. If we are not to expect that the devil should go out of a particular person, that is under a bodily possession, without extraordinary prayer, *or prayer and fasting;* how much less should we expect to have him cast out of the land and the world without it.

I am sensible that considerable has been done in duties of this nature, in some places; but I do not think so much as God, in the present dispensations of his providence, calls for. I should think the people of God in this land, at such a time as this is, would be in the way of their duty, to do three times so much at fasting and prayer as they do; not only, nor principally, for the pouring out of the Spirit on those towns or places where they belong; but that God would appear for his church, and in mercy to miserable men, to carry on his work in the land, and in the world of mankind, and to fulfil the things that he has spoken of in his word, that his church has been so long wishing and hoping and waiting for. *They that make mention of the Lord*, at this day, ought not *to keep silence*, and should *give God no rest, until he establish, and until he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth*, agreeably to Isa. lxii. 6, 7. Before the first great outpouring of the Spirit of God on the Christian church, which began at Jerusalem, the church of God gave themselves to incessant prayer, Acts i. 13, 14. There is a time spoken of, wherein God will remarkably and wonderfully appear, for the deliverance of his church from all her enemies, and when he will *avenge his own elect:* and Christ reveals that this will be in answer to their incessant prayers, or *crying day and night*, Luke xviii. 7. In Israel, the *day of atonement*, which was their great day of fasting and prayer, preceded and made way for the glorious and joyful *feast of tabernacles*. When Christ is mystically born into the world, to rule over all nations, it is represented in the 12th chapter of Revelation, as being in consequence of the church's *crying, and travailing in birth, and being pained to be delivered*. One thing here intended, doubtless is, her crying and agonizing in prayer.

God seems now, at this very time, to be waiting for this from us. When God is about to bestow some great blessing on his church, it is often his manner, in the first place, so to order things in his providence as to show his church their great need of it, and to bring them into distress for want of it, and so put them upon crying earnestly to him for it. And let us consider God's present

dispensations towards his church in this land: a glorious work of his grace has been begun and carried on; and God has, of late, suffered innumerable difficulties to arise, that do in a great measure clog and hinder it, and bring many of God's dear children into great distress; and yet does not wholly forsake the work of his hand; there are remarkable tokens of his presence still to be seen, here and there; as though he was not forward to forsake us, and (if I may so say) as though he had a mind to carry on his work; but only was waiting for something that he expected in us, as requisite in order to it. And we have a great deal of reason to think, that one thing at least is, that we should further acknowledge the greatness and necessity of such a mercy, and our dependence on God for it, in earnest and importunate prayers to him. And by the many errors that have been run into, and the wounds we have thereby given ourselves and the cause that we would promote, and the mischief and confusion we have thereby made, God has hitherto been remarkably showing us our great and universal dependence on him, and exceeding need of his help and grace: which should engage our cries to him for it.

There is no way that Christians in a private capacity can do so much to promote the work of God, and advance the kingdom of Christ, as by prayer. By this even women, children, and servants may have a public influence. Let persons be never so weak, and never so mean, and under never so poor advantages to do much for Christ, and the souls of men otherwise; yet, if they have much of the spirit of grace and supplication, in this way, they may have power with Him that is infinite in power, and has the government of the whole world: and so a poor man in his cottage may have a blessed influence all over the world. God is, if I may so say, at the command of the prayer of faith; and in this respect is, as it were, under the power of his people; *as princes, they have power with God, and prevail:* though they may be private persons, their prayers are put in the name of a Mediator, that is a public person, being the head of the whole church, and the Lord of the universe: and if they have a great sense of the importance of eternal things, and concern for the precious souls of men, yet they need not regret it, that they are not preachers; they may go in their earnestness and agonies of soul, and pour out their souls before One that is able to do all things; before him they may speak as freely as ministers: they have a great High Priest, through whom they may come boldly at all times, and may vent themselves before a prayer hearing Father, without any restraint.

If the people of God, at this day, instead of spending time in fruitless disputing, and talking about opposers, and judging of them, and animadverting upon the unreasonableness of their talk and behavior, and its inconsistence with true experience, would be more silent in this way, and open their mouths much more before God, and spend more time in fasting and prayer, they would be more in the way of a blessing. And if some Christians in the land, that have been complaining of their ministers, and struggling in vain to deliver themselves from the difficulties they have complained of, under their ministry, had said and acted less before men, and had applied themselves with all their might to cry to God for their ministers, had as it were risen, and stormed heaven with their humble, fervent, and incessant prayers for them, they would have been much more in the way of success.

God in his providence, appearing in the present state of things, does especially call on his people in New England to be very much in praying to him for the pouring out of the Spirit upon ministers in the land. For though it is not for us to determine, concerning particular ministers, how much they have of the Spirit of God; yet in the general, it is apparent, that there is, at this day, need

of very great degrees of the presence of God with the ministry in New England, much greater degrees of it than has hitherto been granted; they need it for themselves, and the church of God stands in extreme need of it.

In days of fasting and prayer, wherein the whole church or congregation is concerned, if the whole day, besides what is spent in our families, was not spent in the meeting-house, but part of it in particular praying companies or societies, it would have a tendency to animate and engage devotion, more than if the whole day were spent in public, where the people are no way active themselves in the worship, any otherwise than as they join with the minister. The inhabitants of many of our towns are now divided into particular praying societies, most of the people, young and old, have voluntarily associated themselves, in distinct companies, for mutual assistance, in social worship, in private houses: what I intend, therefore, is, that days of prayer should be spent partly in these distinct praying companies. Such a method of keeping a fast as *this*, has several times been proved, viz., in the forenoon, after the duties of the family and closet, as early as might be, all the people of the congregation have gathered in their particular religious societies; companies of men by themselves, and companies of women by themselves; young men by themselves, and young women by themselves; and companies of children, in all parts of the town, by themselves, as many as were capable of social religious exercises; the boys by themselves, and girls by themselves: and about the middle of the day, at an appointed hour, all have met together in the house of God, to offer up public prayers, and to hear a sermon suitable to the occasion: and then, they have retired from the house of God again, into their private societies, and spent the remaining part of the day in praying together there, excepting so much as was requisite for the duties of the family and closet in their own houses. And it has been found to be of great benefit, to assist and engage the minds of the people in the duties of the day.

I have often thought it would be a thing very desirable, and very likely to be followed with a great blessing, if there could be some contrivance, that there should be an agreement of all God's people in America, that are well affected to this work, to keep a day of fasting and prayer to God; wherein we should all unite on the same day, in humbling ourselves before God for our past long-continued lukewarmness and unprofitableness; not omitting humiliation for the errors that so many of God's people that have been zealously affected towards this work, through their infirmity and remaining blindness and corruption, have run into; and together with thanksgivings to God, for so glorious and wonderful a display of his power and grace, in the late outpourings of his Spirit; to address the Father of mercies, with prayers and supplications, and earnest cries, that he would guide and direct his own people, and that he would continue, and still carry on this work, and more abundantly and extensively pour out his Spirit; and particularly that he would pour out his Spirit upon ministers; and that he would bow the heavens and come down, and erect his glorious kingdom through the earth. Some perhaps may think that its being all on the same day, is a circumstance of no great consequence; but I cannot be of that mind: such a circumstance makes the union and agreement of God's people in his worship the more visible, and puts the greater honor upon God, and would have a great tendency to assist and enliven the devotions of Christians: it seems to me it would mightily encourage and animate God's saints, in humbly and earnestly seeking to God, for such blessings which concern them all; and that it would be much for the rejoicing of all, to think, that at the same time, such multitudes of God's dear children, far and near, were sending

up their cries to the same common Father, for the same mercies. Christ speaks of agreement in asking, as what contributes to the prevalence of the prayers of his people. Matt. xviii. 19, "Again I say unto you, that if any two of you shall agree on earth, as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven." If the agreement or united purpose and appointment of but two of God's children, would contribute much to the prevalence of their prayers, how much more the agreement of so many thousands! Christ delights greatly in the union of his people, as appears by his prayer in the 17th of John: and especially is the appearance of their union in worship, lovely and attractive unto him.

I doubt not but such a thing as I have now mentioned is practicable, without a great deal of trouble. Some considerable number of ministers might meet together and draw up the proposal, wherein a certain day should be pitched upon, at a sufficient distance, endeavoring therein to avoid any other public day, that might interfere with the design, in any of the provinces, and the business of the day should be particularly mentioned; and these proposals should be published, and sent abroad, into all parts, with a desire that as many ministers as are disposed to fall in with them, would propose the matter to their congregations, and having taken their consent, would subscribe their names, together with the places of which they are ministers, and send back the proposals thus subscribed to the printer (the hands of many ministers might be to one paper); and the printer having received the paper thus subscribed, from all the provinces, might print the proposals again, with all the names; thus they might be sent abroad again, with the names, that God's people might know who are united with them in the affair: one of the ministers of Boston might be desired to have the oversight of the printing and dispersing the proposals. In such a way, perhaps, might be fulfilled in some measure, such a general mourning and supplication of God's people, as is spoken of, Zech. xii. at the latter end, with which the church's glorious day is to be introduced. And such a day might be something like the *day of atonement* in Israel, before the joyful *feast of tabernacles*.

One thing more I would mention concerning fasting and prayer, wherein I think there has been a neglect in ministers; and that is, that although they recommend, and much insist on the duty of secret prayer, in their preaching, so little is said about secret fasting. It is a duty recommended by our Saviour to his followers, just in like manner as secret prayer is; as may be seen by comparing the 5th and 6th verses of the 6th chapter of Matthew with verses 16, 17, 18. Though I do not suppose that secret fasting is to be practised in a stated manner, and steady course as secret prayer, yet it seems to me it is a duty that all professing Christians should practise, and frequently practise. There are many occasions, of both a spiritual and temporal nature, that do properly require it; and there are many particular mercies, that we desire for ourselves or friends, that it would be proper, in this manner, to seek of God.

Another thing I would also mention, wherein it appears to me that there has been an omission, with respect to the external worship of God. There has been of late, a great increase of preaching the word, and a great increase of social prayer, and a great increase of singing praises: these external duties of religion are attended much more frequently than they used to be; yet I cannot understand that there is any increase of the administration of the Lord's supper, or that God's people do any more frequently commemorate the dying love of their Redeemer, in this sacred memorial of it, than they used to do: though I do not see why an increase of love to Christ, should not dispose

Christians as much to increase in this, as in those other duties; or why it is not as proper, that Christ's disciples should abound in this duty, in this joyful season, which is spiritually supper-time, a feast-day with God's saints, wherein Christ is so abundantly manifesting his dying love to souls, and is dealing forth so liberally of the precious fruits of his death. It seems plain by the Scripture, that the primitive Christians were wont to celebrate their memorial of the sufferings of their dear Redeemer every Lord's day: and so I believe it will be again in the church of Christ, in days that are approaching. And whether we attend this holy and sweet ordinance so often now, or no, yet I cannot but think it would become us, at such a time as this, to attend it much oftener than is commonly done in the land.

But another thing I would mention, which is of much greater importance, that we should attend to; and that is the duty, that is incumbent upon God's people at this day, to take heed, that while they abound in external duties of devotion, such as praying, hearing, singing, and attending religious meetings, there be a proportionable care to abound in moral duties, such as acts of righteousness, truth, meekness, forgiveness, and love towards our neighbor; which are of much greater importance in the sight of God, than all the externals of his worship: which our Saviour was particularly careful that men should be well aware of. Matt. ix. 13, "But go ye, and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice." And chap. xii. 7, "But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless."

The internal acts and principles of the worship of God, or the worship of the heart, in the love and fear of God, trust in God, and resignation to God, &c., are the most essential and important of all duties of religion whatsoever; for therein consists the essence of all religion. But of this inward religion, there are two sorts of external manifestations or expressions. The one sort are outward acts of worship, such as meeting in religious assemblies, attending sacraments, and other outward institutions, and honoring God with gestures, such as bowing, or kneeling before him, or with words, in speaking honorably of him, in prayer, praise, or religious conference. And the other sort, are the expressions of our love to God, by obeying his moral commands, of self-denial, righteousness, meekness, and Christian love, in our behavior among men. And the latter are of vastly the greatest importance in the Christian life. God makes little account of the former, in comparison of them. They are abundantly more insisted on, by the prophets, in the Old Testament, and Christ and his apostles, in the New. When these two kinds of duties are spoken of together, the latter are ever more greatly preferred. As in Isa. i. 12, to 18, and Amos v. 21, &c., and Micah. vi. 7, 8, and Isa. lviii. 5, 6, 7, and Zech. vii. ten first verses, and Jer. ii. seven first verses, and Matt. xv. 3, &c. Often, when the times were very corrupt in Israel, the people abounded in the former kind of duties, but were, at such times, always notoriously deficient in the latter; as the prophets complain, Isa. lviii., four first verses, Jer. vi. 13, compared with verse 20. Hypocrites and self-righteous persons, do much more commonly abound in the former kind of duties, than the latter; as Christ remarks of the Pharisees, Matt. xxiii. 14, 25, and 34. When the Scripture directs us to *show our faith by our works*, it is principally the latter sort are intended; as appears by James ii. from 8th verse to the end, and 1 John ii. 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. And we are to be judged at the last day, especially by these latter sort of works; as is evident by the account we have of the day of judgment in the 25th of Matthew. External acts of worship in words and gestures, and outward forms, are of little use, but as signs of

something else, or as they are a profession of inward worship: they are not so properly showing our religion by our deeds; for they are only a showing our religion by words, or an outward profession. But he that shows religion in the other sort of duties, shows it is something more than a profession of words, he shows it in deeds. And though deeds may be hypocritical, as well as words; yet in themselves they are of greater importance, for they are much more profitable to ourselves and our neighbor. We cannot express our love to God, by doing any thing that is profitable to God; God would therefore have us do it in those things that are profitable to our neighbors, whom he has constituted his receivers; our goodness extends not to God, but to our fellow Christians. The latter sort of duties put greater honor upon God, because there is greater self-denial in them. The external acts of worship, consisting in bodily gestures, words, and sounds, are the cheapest part of religion, and least contrary to our lusts. The difficulty of thorough, external religion, does not lie in them. Let wicked men enjoy their covetousness, and their pride, their malice, envy and revenge, and their sensuality and voluptuousness, in their behavior amongst men, and they will be willing to compound the matter with God, and submit to what forms of worship you please, and as many as you please; as is manifest in the Jews of old, in the days of the prophets, and the Pharisees in Christ's time, and the Papists and Mahometans at this day.

At a time when there is an appearance of the approach of any glorious revival of God's church, God does especially call his professing people to the practice of moral duties. Isa. lvi. 1, "Thus saith the Lord; Keep ye judgment and do justice; for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed." So when John preached that *the kingdom of heaven was at hand*, and cried to the people, *Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight*, as we have an account, Luke iii. 4, the people asked him, *What they should do?* He answers, *He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none, and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.* The publicans said, *What shall we do?* He answers, *Exact no more than that which is appointed you. And the soldiers asked him*, What shall we do? He replies, *Do violence to no man; neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages.* Verses 10, 11, 12, 13, 14.

God's people, at such a time as this, ought especially to abound in deeds of charity, or alms-giving. We generally, in these days, seem to fall far below the true spirit and practice of Christianity, with regard to this duty, and seem to have but little notion of it, so far as I can understand the New Testament. At a time when God is so liberal of spiritual things, we ought not to be strait-handed towards him, and sparing of our temporal things. So far as I can judge by the Scripture, there is no external duty whatsoever, by which persons will be so much in the way, not only of receiving temporal benefits, but also spiritual blessings, the influences of God's holy Spirit in the heart, in divine discoveries, and spiritual consolations. I think it would be unreasonable to understand those promises, made to this duty, in the 58th chapter of Isaiah, in a sense exclusive of spiritual discoveries and comforts. Isa. lviii. 7, &c. "Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out, to thy house? When thou seest the naked that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thy health shall spring forth speedily, and thy righteousness shall go before thee, and the glory of the Lord shall be thy rear-ward; then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the pointing forth of the finger, and speaking vanity; and if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry,

and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday; and the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones; and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not." So, that giving to the poor is the way to receive spiritual blessings, is manifest by Psal. cxii. 4, &c.: "Unto the upright, there ariseth light in the darkness; he is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous: a good man showeth favor, and lendeth, he will guide his affairs with discretion; surely he shall not be moved forever; the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance; he shall not be afraid, of evil tidings, his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord; his heart is established, he shall not be afraid, until he see his desire upon his enemies: he hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his horn shall be exalted with honor." That this is one likely means to obtain assurance, is evident by 1 John iii. 18, 19 "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed, and in truth; and hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him."

We have a remarkable instance in Abraham, of God's rewarding deeds of charity with sweet discoveries of himself, when he had been remarkably charitable to his brother Lot, and the people that he had redeemed out of captivity with him, by exposing his life to rescue them, and had retaken not only the persons, but all the goods, the spoil that had been taken by Chedorlaomer, and the kings that were with him, and the king of Sodom offered him, that if he would give him the persons, he might take the goods to himself; Abraham refused to take any thing, even so much as a thread or shoe latchet, but returned all. He might have greatly enriched himself, if he had taken the spoils to himself, for it was the spoils of five wealthy kings, and their kingdoms, yet he coveted it not; the king and people of Sodom were now become objects of charity, having been stripped of all by their enemies, therefore Abraham generously bestowed all upon them; as we have an account in Gen. xiv. and four last verses. And he was soon rewarded for it, by a blessed discovery that God made of himself to him; as we have an account in the next words: "After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abraham, in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abraham, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." "I am thy shield, to defend thee in battle, as I have now done; and though thou hast charitably refused to take any reward, for exposing thy life to rescue this people, yet fear not, thou shalt not lose, thou shalt have a reward, I am thy exceeding great reward."

When Christ was upon earth he was poor, and an object of charity; and during the time of his public ministry, he was supported by the charity of some of his followers, and particularly certain women, of whom we read Luke viii. 2, 3. And these women were rewarded, by being peculiarly favored with gracious manifestations, which Christ made of himself to them. He discovered himself first to them after his resurrection, before the twelve disciples: they first saw a vision of glorious angels, who spake comfortably to them; and then Christ appeared to them, and spake peace to them, saying, *All hail, be not afraid; and they were admitted to come and hold him by the feet, and worship him*, Matt. xxviii. And though we cannot now be charitable in this way, to Christ in person, who in his exalted state is infinitely above the need of our charity; yet we may be charitable to Christ now, as well as they then; for though Christ is not here, yet he has left others in his room, to be his receivers, and they are the poor. Christ is yet poor in his members; and he that gives to them lends to the Lord: and Christ tells us that he shall look on what is done to them, as done to him.

Rebekah, in her marriage with Isaac, was undoubtedly a remarkable type of the church, in her espousals to the Lord Jesus. But she found her husband, in doing deeds of charity, agreeable to the prayer of Abraham's servant, who prayed that this might be the thing that might distinguish and mark out the virgin, that was to be Isaac's wife. So Cornelius was brought to the knowledge of Christ, in this way. *He was a devout man, and one that feared God, with all his house; which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway. And an angel appeared to him, and said to him, thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God; and now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter,* &c., Acts x. at the beginning. And we have an account in the following parts of the chapter, how God by Peter's preaching revealed Christ to Cornelius and his family, and the Holy Ghost's descending upon them, and filling their hearts with joy and their mouths with praises.

Some may possibly object that for persons to do deeds of charity, in hope of obtaining spiritual blessings and comforts in this way, would seem to show a self-righteous spirit, as though they would offer something to God to purchase these favors. But if this be a good objection, it may be made against every duty whatsoever. All external duties of the first table will be excluded by it, as well as those of the second. First table duties have as direct a tendency to raise self-righteous persons' expectations of receiving something from God, on account of them, as second table duties; and on some accounts more, for those duties are more immediately offered *to God*, and therefore persons are more ready to expect something *from God* for them. But no duty is to be neglected, for fear of making a righteousness of it. And I have always observed, that those professors that are most partial in their duty, exact and abundant in external duties of the first table, and slack as to those of the second, are the most self-righteous.

If God's people in this land, were once brought to abound in such deeds of love, as much as in praying, hearing, singing, and religious meetings and conference, it would be a most blessed omen: there is nothing would have a greater tendency to bring the God of love down from heaven to the earth: so amiable would be the sight, in the eyes of our loving and exalted Redeemer, that it would soon as it were fetch Him down from his throne in heaven, to set up His tabernacle with men on the earth, and dwell with them. I do not remember ever to have read of any remarkable outpouring of the Spirit, that continued any long time, but what was attended with an abounding in this duty. So we know it was with that great effusion of the Spirit that began at Jerusalem in the apostles' days: and so in the late remarkable revival of religion in Saxony, which began by the labors of the famous Professor Franck, and has now been carried on for above thirty years, and has spread its happy influences into many parts of the world; it was begun, and has been carried on, by a wonderful practice of this duty. And the remarkable blessing that God has given Mr. Whitefield, and the great success with which he has crowned him, may well be thought to be very much owing to his laying out himself so abundantly in charitable designs. And it is foretold, that God's people shall abound in this duty, in the time of the great outpouring of the Spirit that shall be in the latter days. Isa. xxxii. 5 and 8, "The vile person shall no more be called liberal, nor the churl said to be bountiful. But the liberal deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things shall he stand."

To promote a reformation, with respect to all sorts of duties, among a professing people, one proper means, and that which is recommended by frequent Scripture examples, is their solemn, public renewing their covenant with God.

And doubtless it would greatly tend to promote this work in the land, if the congregations of God's people could generally be brought to this. If a draught of a covenant should be made by their ministers, wherein there should be an express mention of those particular duties, that the people of the respective congregations have been observed to be most prone to neglect, and those particular sins that they have heretofore especially fallen into, or that it may be apprehended they are especially in danger of, whereby they may prevent or resist the motions of God's Spirit, and the matter should be fully proposed and explained to the people, and they have sufficient opportunity given them for consideration, and then they should be led, all that are capable of understanding, particularly to subscribe the covenant, and also should all appear together, on a day of prayer and fasting, publicly to own it before God in his house, as their vow to the Lord; hereby congregations of Christians would do that which would be beautiful, and would put honor upon God, and be very profitable to themselves.

Such a thing as this, was attended with a very wonderful blessing in Scotland, and followed with a great increase of the blessed tokens of the presence of God, and remarkable outpourings of his Spirit; as the author of *The Fulfilling of the Scripture* informs, p. 186, 5th edition.

A people must be taken, when they are in a good mood, when considerable religious impressions are prevailing among them; otherwise they will hardly be induced to this; but innumerable will be their objections and cavils against it.

One thing more I would mention, which, if God should still carry on this work, would tend much to promote it, and that is, that a history should be published once a month, or once a fortnight, of the progress of it, by one of the ministers of Boston, who are near the press, and are most conveniently situated, to receive accounts from all parts. It has been found by experience, that the tidings of remarkable effects of the power and grace of God in any place, tend greatly to awaken and engage the minds of persons, in other places. It is a great pity, therefore, but that some means should be used, for the most speedy, most extensive and certain giving information of such things, and that the country be not left, only to the slow, partial and doubtful information, and false representations of common report.

Thus I have (I hope, by the help of God) finished what I proposed. I have taken the more pains in it, because it appears to me, that now God is giving us the most happy season to attempt a universal reformation, that ever was given in New England. And it is a thousand pities, that we should fail of that which would be so glorious, for want of being sensible of our opportunity, or being aware of those things that tend to hinder it, or our taking improper courses to obtain it, or not being sensible in what way God expects we should seek it. If it should please God to bless any means for the convincing the country of His hand in this work, and bringing them fully and freely to acknowledge His glorious power and grace in it, and engage with one heart and soul, and by due methods, to endeavor to promote it, it would be a dispensation of divine Providence, that would have a most glorious aspect, happily signifying the approach of great and glorious things to the church of God, and justly causing us to hope that Christ would speedily come, to set up his kingdom of light, holiness, peace and joy on earth, as is foretold in his word.—Amen: even so come Lord Jesus!

A

HUMBLE ATTEMPT TO PROMOTE

EXPLICIT AGREEMENT AND VISIBLE UNION

OF

GOD'S PEOPLE

IN

EXTRAORDINARY PRAYER,

FOR THE REVIVAL OF RELIGION AND THE ADVANCEMENT OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM ON EARTH, PURSUANT TO SCRIPTURE PROMISES AND PROPHECIES CONCERNING THE LAST TIME.

UNION IN PRAYER.

PART I.

The Text opened, and an Account given of the Affair proposed in the Memorial from Scotland.

Zech. viii. 20, 21, 22.—Thus saith the Lord of hosts, It shall yet come to pass, that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities; and the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of Hosts: I will go also. Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of Hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord.

In this chapter we have a prophecy of a future glorious advancement of the church of God; wherein it is evident, something further is intended than ever was fulfilled to the nation of the Jews under the Old Testament. For here are plain prophecies of such things as never were fulfilled before the coming of the Messiah: particularly what is said in the two last verses in the chapter, of *many people and strong nations worshipping and seeking the true God*, and of so great an accession of Gentile nations to the church of God, that by far the greater part of the visible worshippers of God should consist of this new accession, so that they should be to the other as *ten to one;* a certain number for an uncertain. There never happened any thing, from the time of the prophet Zechariah to the coming of Christ, to answer this prophecy: and it can have no fulfilment but either in the calling of the Gentiles, in and after the days of the apostles, or in the future glorious enlargement of the church of God in the *latter ages* of the world, so often foretold by the prophets of the Old Testament, and by the prophet Zechariah in particular, in the latter part of this prophecy. It is most probable, that what the Spirit of God has chief respect to, is that *last* and greatest enlargement and most glorious advancement of the church of God on earth; in the benefits of which especially, the Jewish nation were to have a share, and a very eminent and distinguishing share. There is a great agreement between what is here said, and other prophecies, that must manifestly have respect to the church's latter day glory: as that in Isa. lx. 2, 3, 4, "The Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee: and the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see; all they gather themselves together, they come to thee." That whole chapter, beyond all dispute, has respect to the most glorious state of the church of God on earth. So chap. lxvi. 8, "Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? Shall a nation be born at once?" Ver. 10, "Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her." Ver. 12, "I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream." Micah iv. at the beginning, "But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills,

and people shall flow unto it; and many nations shall come and say, Come, and let us go up unto the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." See also, Isa. ii. at the beginning. There has been nothing yet brought to pass, in any measure to answer these prophecies. And as the prophecy in my text and the following verse does agree with them, so there is reason to think it has a respect to the same times. And indeed there is a remarkable agreement in the description given throughout the chapter, with the representations made of those times elsewhere in the prophets; as may be seen by comparing ver. 3, with Isa. lx. 14; ver. 4, with Isa. lxv. 20, 22, and xxxiii. 24; ver. 6, 7, 8, with Ezek. xxxvii. 2, 11, 12, 21; ver. 7, with Isa. xliii. 5, 6, and xlix. 12, and lix. 19; ver. 12, 13, with Hos. ii. 21, 22, and Ezek. xxxiv. 22—29; ver. 8, 12, 13, with Ezek. xxxvi. 28—30; ver. 13, with Zeph. iii. 20, and Isa. xix. 24; ver. 19, with Isa. lxi. 3, and Jer. xxxi. 12, 13, 14.

So that however the prophet, in some things that are said in this chapter, may have respect to future smiles of heaven on the nation of the Jews, lately returned from the Babylonish captivity, and re-settled in the land of Canaan, in a great increase of their numbers and wealth, and the return of more captives from Chaldea and other countries, &c., yet the Spirit of God has doubtless respect to things far *greater* than these, and of which these were but faint resemblances. We find it common in the prophecies of the Old Testament, that when the prophets are speaking of the favors and blessings of God on the Jews, attending or following their return from the Babylonish captivity, the Spirit of God takes occasion from thence to speak of the incomparably greater blessings on the church, that shall attend and follow her deliverance from the spiritual or mystical Babylon, of which those were a type; and is, as it were, led away to speak almost wholly of these latter, and vastly greater things, so as to seem to forget the former.

And whereas the prophet in this chapter, speaks of God's *bringing his people again from the east and west to Jerusalem* (ver. 7, 8), *and multitudes of all nations taking hold of the skirts of the Jews;* so far as we may suppose that this means literally that nation of the posterity of Jacob, it cannot have chief respect to any return of the Jews from Babylon and other countries, in those ancient times before Christ; for no such things as are here spoken of, attended any such return: but it must have respect to the great calling and gathering of the Jews into the fold of Christ, and their being received to the blessings of his kingdom, after the fall of Antichrist, or the destruction of mystical Babylon.

In the text we have an account *how* this future glorious advancement of the church of God should be brought on, or introduced; viz., by great multitudes in different towns and countries taking up a *joint resolution*, and coming into an express and visible *agreement*, that they will, by united and extraordinary *prayer*, seek to God that he would come and manifest himself, and grant the tokens and fruits of his gracious presence.

Particularly we may observe,

1. The *duty*, with the attendance on which the glorious event foretold shall be brought on; viz., the duty of prayer. Prayer, some suppose, is here to be taken *synechdochically*, for the whole of the worship of God; prayer being a principal part of the worship of the church of God, in the days of the gospel, when sacrifices are abolished: and so that this is to be understood only as a prophecy of a great revival of religion, and of the true worship of God among

his visible people, the accession of others to the church, and turning of multitudes from idolatry to the worship of the true God. But it appears to me reasonable to suppose, that something more special is intended, with regard to the duty of prayer; considering that prayer is here expressly and repeatedly mentioned; and also considering how parallel this place is with many other prophecies, that speak of an extraordinary spirit of prayer, as preceding and introducing that glorious day of revival of religion, and advancement of the church's peace and prosperity, so often foretold (which I shall have occasion to mention hereafter), and particularly the agreeableness of what is here said, with what is said afterwards by the same prophet, of the *pouring out of a spirit of grace and supplications*, as that with which this great revival of religion shall begin, ch. xii. 10.

2. The *good*, that shall be sought by prayer; which is God himself. It is said once and again, *They shall go to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of Hosts.* This is the good they ask for and seek by prayer, the Lord of hosts himself. To *seek God*, as the expression may perhaps be sometimes used in Scripture, may signify no more than seeking the favor or mercy of God. And if it be taken so here, *praying before the Lord, and seeking the Lord of Hosts*, must be looked upon as synonymous expressions. And it must be confessed to be a common thing in Scripture, to signify the same thing repeatedly, by various expressions of the same import, for the greater emphasis. But certainly that expression of *seeking the Lord*, is very commonly used to signify something more than merely in general, to seek some mercy of God: it implies, that God himself is the great good desired and sought after; that the blessings pursued are God's gracious presence, the blessed manifestations of him, union and intercourse with him; or, in short, God's manifestations and communications of himself by his holy Spirit. Thus the Psalmist *desired God, thirsted after him, and sought him.* Psal. lxiii. 1, 2, 8, "O God, thou art my Lord; early will I seek thee. My flesh longeth for thee, in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is, to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary. My soul followeth hard after thee." Psal. lxxiii. 25, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." The Psalmist earnestly pursued after God, *his soul thirsted after him, he stretched forth his hands unto him*, &c., Psal. cxliii. 6. And therefore it is in Scripture the peculiar character of the saints, that they are those that seek God. Psal. xxiv. 6, "This is the generation of them that seek Him." Psal. lxix. 32, "Your heart shall live that seek God;" and in many other places. If the expression in the text be understood agreeably to this sense, then by *seeking the Lord of Hosts*, we must understand a seeking, that God, who had withdrawn, as it were hid himself, for a long time, would return to his church, and grant the tokens and fruits of his gracious presence, and those blessed communications of his Spirit to his people, and to mankind on the earth, which he had often promised, and which his church had long waited for.

And it seems reasonable, to understand the phrase, *seeking the Lord of Hosts*, in this sense here; and not as merely signifying the same thing with praying to God: not only because the expression is repeatedly added to *praying before the Lord*, in the text as signifying something more; but also because the phrase, taken in this sense, is exactly agreeable to other parallel prophetic representations. Thus God's people's seeking by earnest prayer, the promised restoration of the church of God, after the Babylonish captivity, and the great apostasy that occasioned it, is called their *seeking God, and searching for him;* and God's granting this promised revival and restoration is called his being found of them. Jer. xxix. 10—14, "For thus saith the Lord, that after seventy years be accomplished at

Babylon, I will visit you and perform my good word towards you, in causing you to return to this place. For I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye go and call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you; and ye shall seek me and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart; and I will be found of you, saith the Lord, and I will turn away your captivity." And the prophets from time to time, represent God, in a low and afflicted state of his church, as being withdrawn and hiding himself. Isa. xlv. 15, "Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour." Chap. lvii. 17, "I hid me, and was wroth." And they represent God's people, while his church is in such a state, before God delivers and restores the same, as *seeking Him, looking for Him, searching and waiting for Him, and calling after Him.* Hos v. 15, "I will go and return unto my place, until they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early." Isa. viii. 17, "I will wait upon the Lord that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for Him." And when God, in answer to their prayers and succeeding their endeavors, delivers, restores and advances his church, according to his promise, then he is said to answer, and come, and say, Here am I, and to show himself; and they are said to find Him, and see Him plainly. Isa. lviii. 9, "Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; and thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am." Isa. xlv. 17, "But Israel shall be saved in the Lord, with an everlasting salvation." And ver. 19, "I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain." Chap. xxv. 8, 9, "The Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces, and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off the earth. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us; this is the Lord, we have waited for him; we will be glad, and rejoice in his salvation." Together with the next chapter, ver. 8, 9, "Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O Lord, we have waited for thee: the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee. With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea with my spirit within me will I seek thee early. For when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." Isa. lii. 6, 7, 8, "Therefore my people shall know my name: therefore they shall know in that day, that I am He that doth speak: behold, it is I. How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing; for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion."

3. We may observe who they are, that shall be united in thus seeking the Lord of Hosts: *the inhabitants of many cities*, and of many countries, *yea, many people, and strong nations;* great multitudes in different parts of the world, shall conspire in this business. From the representation made in the prophecy, it appears rational to suppose, that it will be fulfilled something after this manner: first, that there shall be given much of a spirit of prayer to God's people in many places, disposing them to come into an express agreement, unitedly to pray to God in an extraordinary manner, that he would appear for the help of his church, and in mercy to mankind, and pour out his Spirit, revive his work, and advance his spiritual kingdom in the world as he has promised; and that this disposition to such prayer, and union in it, will gradually spread more and more, and increase to greater degrees; with which at length will gradually be introduced a revival of religion, and a disposition to greater engagedness in the

worship and service of God, amongst his professing people; that this being observed, will be the means of awakening others, making them sensible of the wants of their souls, and exciting in them a great concern for their spiritual and everlasting good, and putting them upon earnestly crying to God for spiritual mercies, and disposing them to join with God's people in that extraordinary seeking and serving of God, which they shall see them engaged in; and that in this manner religion shall be propagated, until the awakening reaches those that are in the *highest stations*, and until *whole nations* be awakened, and there be at length an accession of many of the chief nations of the world to the church of God. Thus after the inhabitants of many cities of Israel, or of God's professing people, have taken up and pursued a joint resolution, to go and pray before the Lord and seek the Lord of Hosts, others shall be drawn to worship and serve Him with them; until at length *many people* and *strong nations* shall join themselves to them; and there shall, in process of time, be a vast accession to the church, so that it shall be ten times as large as it was before; yea, at length, all nations shall be converted unto God. Thus *ten men shall take hold, out of all languages of the nations, of the skirt of him that is a Jew* (in the sense of the apostle, Rom. ii. 28, 29), *saying, We will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you.* And thus that shall be fulfilled, Psal. lxv. 2, "O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come."

4. We may observe the mode of their union in this duty. It is a visible union, a union by explicit agreement, a joint resolution declared by one to another, come into by being first proposed by some, and readily and expressly fallen in with by others. The inhabitants of one city shall apply themselves to the inhabitants of another, saying, *Let us go*, &c. Those to whom the motion is made, shall comply with it; the proposal shall take with many, it shall be a prevailing, spreading thing; one shall follow another's example, one and another shall say, *I will go also.* Some suppose that those words, *I will go also*, are to be taken as the words of him that makes the proposal; as much as to say, I do not propose that to you, which I am not willing to do myself, I desire *you* to go, and I am ready to go *with you.* But this is to suppose no more to be expressed in these latter words, than was expressed before in the proposal itself; for these words, *let us go*, signify as much, as that I am willing to go, and desire you to go with me. It seems to me much more natural, to understand these latter words as importing the *consent* of those to whom the proposal is made, or the *reply* of one and another that falls in with it. This is much more agreeable to the plain design of the text, which is to represent the concurrence of great numbers in this affair; and more agreeable to the representation made in the next verse, of one following another, many *taking hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew.* And though, if the words are thus understood, we must suppose an ellipsis in the text, something understood that is not expressed, as if it had been said, *Those of other cities shall say* I will go also; yet this is not difficult to be supposed; such ellipses are very common in Scripture. We have one exactly parallel with it in Jer. iii. 22, "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings: behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the Lord our God," i. e., the backsliding children shall say, "Behold, we are come unto thee," &c. And in Cant. iv. last, and v. 1, "Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits. I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse," i. e., her beloved shall say, "I am come into my garden." We have the like throughout that song. So Psal. l. 6, 7, "The heaven shall declare his righteousness; for God is Judge himself. Hear, O my people, and I will speak," i. e., the judge shall say, "Hear O my people," &c.

So Psal. lxxxii. 1, 2. The Psalms and prophets abound with such figures of speech.

5. We may observe the *manner of prayer* agreed on, or the manner in which they agree to engage in and perform the duty. Let us go *speedily* to pray; or as it is in the margin, Let us go *continually*. The words literally translated are, *Let us go in going*. Such an ingemination or doubling of words is very common in the Hebrew language, when it is intended that a thing shall be very strongly expressed; it generally implies the superlative degree of a thing; as the *Holy of Holies* signifies the most holy: but it commonly denotes, not only the utmost degree of a thing, but also the utmost certainty; as when God said to Abraham, *In multiplying, I will multiply thy seed*, Gen. xxii. 17, it implies both that God would certainly multiply his seed, and also multiply it exceedingly. So when God said to Adam, *In the day thou eatest thereof, in dying thou shalt die* (as the words are in the original), it implies both that he should *surely* die, and also that he should die most *terribly*, should utterly perish, and be destroyed to the utmost degree. Yea, sometimes it seems to imply something else still: and in short, as this ingemination of words in the Hebrew, in general denotes the strength of expression, so it is used to signify almost all those things that are wont to be signified by the various forms of strong speech in other languages: sometimes it signifies the utmost degree of a thing; sometimes certainty; sometimes the peremptoriness and terribleness of a threatening, or the greatness and positiveness of a promise, the strictness of a command, and the earnestness of a request. When God says to Adam, *Dying thou shalt die*, it is equivalent to such strong expressions in English as, *thou shalt die indeed*, or, *thou shalt die with a witness*. So when it is said in the text, *let us go in going, and pray before the Lord*, the strength of the expression represents the earnestness of those that make the proposal, their great engagedness in the affair; and with respect to the duty proposed, it may be understood to signify, that they should be speedy, fervent, and constant in it; or, in one word, that it should be *thoroughly* performed.

6. We may learn from the tenor of this prophecy, together with the context, that this union in such prayer is foretold as a *becoming* and *happy* thing, and that which would be acceptable to God, and attended with glorious success.

From the whole we may infer, that it is a very *suitable* thing, and *well pleasing to God*, for many people, in different parts of the world, by express *agreement*, to come into a *visible union*, in extraordinary, speedy, fervent and constant *prayer*, for those great effusions of the *Holy Spirit*, which shall bring on that *advancement* of Christ's church and kingdom, that God has so often promised shall be in the *latter ages* of the world.

And so from hence I would infer the *duty* of God's people, with regard to the *memorial* lately sent over into America, from Scotland, by a number of ministers there, proposing a *method* for such a *union* as has been spoken of, in extraordinary prayer for this great mercy.

And it being the special design of this discourse, to persuade such as are friends to the interests of Christ's kingdom, to a *compliance* with the proposal and request made in that memorial, I shall first give a short *historical* account of the *affair* it relates to, from letters, papers and pamphlets, that have come over from Scotland; to which I shall annex the *memorial* itself: and then I shall offer some *arguments* and *motives*, tending to induce the friends of religion to fall in with what is proposed: and lastly, make answer to some *objections* that may possibly be made against it.

As to the *first* of these things, viz., an historical account of the concert, which the memorial relates to, the following observations may give a sufficient view of that affair.

In October, A. D. 1744, a number of ministers in Scotland, taking into consideration the state of God's church, and of the world of mankind, judged that the providence of God, at such a day, did loudly call such as were concerned for the welfare of Zion, to *united, extraordinary* applications to the God of all grace, suitably acknowledging Him as the fountain of all the spiritual benefits and blessings of his church, and earnestly praying to Him, that he would *appear in his glory*, and favor Zion, and manifest his compassion to the world of mankind, by an abundant effusion of his *Holy Spirit* on all the churches, and the whole habitable earth, to revive true religion in all parts of Christendom, and to deliver *all nations* from their great and manifold spiritual calamities and miseries, and bless them with the unspeakable benefits of the kingdom of our glorious Redeemer, and *fill the whole earth with His glory*. And consulting one another on the subject, they looked on *themselves*, for their own part, obliged to engage in this duty; and, as far as in them lay, to persuade *others* to the same: and to endeavor to find out and fix on some *method*, that should most effectually tend to promote and uphold such extraordinary application to heaven among God's people. And after seeking to God by prayer for direction, they determined on the following method, as what they would conform to in their own practice, and propose to be practised by others, for the *two years* next following, viz., to set apart some time on Saturday evening and Sabbath morning, every week, for the purpose aforesaid, as other duties would allow to every one respectively; and more solemnly, the first Tuesday of each quarter (beginning with the first Tuesday of November then next ensuing), either the whole day, or a part of the day, as persons find themselves disposed, or think their circumstances will allow: the time to be spent either in *private* praying societies, or in *public* meetings, or alone in *secret*, as shall be found most practicable, or judged most convenient, by such as are willing, in some way or other, to join in this affair: but not that any should make any promises, or be looked upon as under strict bonds in any respect, constantly and without fail to observe every one of these days, whatever their circumstances should be, or however other duties and necessary affairs might interfere; or that persons should look upon themselves bound with regard to these days in any wise as though the time were holy, or the setting them apart for religious purposes were established by sacred authority: but yet, as a proper guard against negligence and unsteadiness, and a prudent preservative from yielding to a disposition, that persons might be liable to, through the prevalence of indolence and listlessness, to excuse themselves on trivial occasions, it was proposed, that those that unite in this affair, should resolve with themselves, that if, by urgent business, or otherwise, they were hindered from joining with others, on the very day agreed on, yet they would not wholly neglect bearing their part in the duty proposed, but would take the first convenient day following, for that purpose.

The reason why Saturday evening and Lord's day morning were judged most convenient for the *weekly* seasons, was, that these times being so near the time of dispensing *gospel ordinances* through the Christian world, which are the great means, in the use of which God is wont to grant his Spirit to mankind, and the principal means that the Spirit of God makes use of to carry on his *work of grace*, it may well be supposed that the minds of Christians in general will at these seasons be especially disengaged from secular affairs, and disposed to pious meditations and the duties of devotion, and more naturally led to seek

the communications of the Holy Spirit, and success of the means of grace. And as to the *quarterly* times, it was thought helpful to memory, that they should be on one or other of the *first* days of each quarter; Tuesday was preferred to Monday, because in some places people might have public prayers and sermon on the stated day, which might not be so convenient on Monday, as on some day at a greater distance from the Sabbath.

It was reckoned a *chief use* of such an agreement and method as this, that it would be a good expedient for the maintaining and keeping up, amongst the people of God, that great Christian duty of *prayerfulness* for the *coming of Christ's kingdom*, in general, which Christ has directed his followers to be so much in, that it may not be out of mind, and in a great measure sunk. Things, that we are too little inclined to, through sloth, carnality, or a fulness of our own worldly and private concerns, and that are to be attended at some seasons or other, and have no special seasons stated for them, are apt to be *forgotten*, or *put off* from time to time, and as it were adjourned *without day;* and so, if not wholly neglected, yet too little attended. But when we fix certain seasons, that we resolve, unless extraordinarily hindered, to devote to the duty, it tends to prevent forgetfulness, and a settled negligence of it. The certain returns of the season will naturally refresh the memory; will tend to put us in mind of the precept of Christ, and the obligations that lie on all his followers, to abound in such a *duty*, and renewedly engage us to the consideration of the importance and necessity and unspeakable value of the *mercy* sought; and so, by frequent renovation, to keep alive the consideration and sense of these things at *all times*. Thus the first promoters of this agreement judged, that it would be subservient to more abundant prayerfulness for effusions of the Holy Spirit, at all times through the year, both in secret and social worship; particularly as to this last, in congregations, families, and other praying societies. And then they also judged, that such an *agreed union* would tend to *animate* and *encourage* God's people in the duty proposed; and that particular persons and societies, knowing that great multitudes of their fellow Christians, in so many distant places, were at the same time (as a token of the union of their hearts with them in this affair) by agreement engaged in the same holy exercise, would naturally be enlivened in the duty by such a consideration.

It was not thought best, to propose at first a longer time for the continuance of this precise method, than two years: it being considered, that it is not possible, before any trial, so well to judge of the expedience of a particular method and certain circumstances of the managing and ordering such an affair, as after some time of experience. And it was not known, but that after long consideration, and some trial, it might be thought best to alter some circumstances; or whether others, that had not yet been consulted, might not propose a better method. The time first agreed on, though but short, was thought sufficient to give opportunity for judgment and experience, and for such as were disposed to union in an affair of such a nature, in distant places, mutually to communicate their sentiments on the subject.

The way, in which those that first projected and came into this agreement, thought best for the giving notice of it and proposing it to others, was not by any thing published from the press; but by personal conversation with such as they could conveniently have immediate access to, and by private correspondence with others at a distance. At first it was intended, that some formal paper, proposing the matter, should be sent about for proper amendments and improvements, and then concurrence: but on more mature deliberation, it was considered how this might give a handle to objections (which they thought it best, to the ut-

most, to avoid in the infancy of the affair), and how practicable it was, without any such formality, to spread the substance of the proposal by private letters, together with a request to their correspondents, mutually to communicate their thoughts. Therefore this was fixed on, as the method that was preferable at the beginning. Accordingly, they proposed and endeavored to promote the affair in this way; and with such success, that great numbers in Scotland and England fell in with the proposal, and some in North America. As to Scotland, it was complied with by numbers in the four chief towns, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen and Dundee, and many country towns and congregations in various parts of the land: one of the ministers, that was primarily concerned in this affair, in a letter to one of his correspondents, speaks of an explicit declaration of the concurrence of the praying societies in Edinburgh, which they had made in a letter. The number of the praying societies in that city is very considerable: Mr. Robe of Kilsyth (in a letter to Mr. Prince of Boston, dated Nov. 3, 1743), says, there were then above thirty societies of young people there newly erected, some of whom consisted of upwards of thirty members. As to Glasgow, this union was unanimously agreed to by about forty-five praying societies there; as an eminent minister in that city informs, in a letter.

The two years, first agreed on, ended last November. A little before this time expired, a number of ministers in Scotland agreed on a memorial to be printed, and sent abroad to their brethren in various parts, proposing to them and requesting of them to join with them in the continuance of this method of united prayer, and in endeavors to promote it.—Copies of which memorial have lately been sent over into New England, to the number of near five hundred, directed to be distributed in almost every county in this province of the Massachusetts Bay, and also in several parts of Connecticut, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, New-York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, Carolina, and Georgia.—The most (I suppose) of these were sent to one of the congregational ministers in Boston, with a letter subscribed by twelve ministers in Scotland, about the affair: many of them to another of the said ministers of Boston; and some to a minister in Connecticut. It being short, I shall here insert a copy of it at length. It is as follows:

MEMORIAL

FROM SEVERAL MINISTERS IN SCOTLAND, TO THEIR BRETHREN IN DIFFERENT PLACES, ON CONTINUING A CONCERT FOR PRAYER, FIRST ENTERED INTO IN THE YEAR 1744.

Whereas it was the chief scope of this Concert, to promote more abundant application to a duty that is perpetually binding, *prayer that our Lord's kingdom may come*, joined with *praises:* and it contained some circumstantial expedients, apprehended to be very subservient to that design, relating to stated times for such exercises, so far as this would not interfere with other duties; particularly a part of Saturday evening, and Sabbath morning, every week; and more solemnly of some one of the first days of each of the four great divisions of the year, that is, of each quarter; as the first Tuesday, or first convenient day after: and the concert, as to this circumstance, was extended only to two years; it being intended, that before these expired, persons engaged in the concert should reciprocally communicate their sentiments and inclinations, as to the prolonging of the time, with or without alteration, as to the circumstance mentioned: and it was intended by the first promoters, that others at a distance should propose such circumstantial amendments or improvements, as they

should find proper: it is hereby earnestly entreated, that such would communicate their sentiments accordingly, now that the time first proposed is near expiring.

II. To induce those already engaged to adhere, and others to accede to this concert; it seems of importance to observe, that declarations of concurrence, the communicating and spreading of which are so evidently useful, are to be understood in such a latitude, as to keep at the greatest distance from entangling men's minds: not as binding men to set apart any stated days from secular affairs, or even to fix on any part of such and such precise days, whether it be convenient or not; nor as absolute promises in any respect: but as friendly, harmonious resolutions, with liberty to alter circumstances as shall be found expedient. On account of all which latitude, and that the circumstantial part extends only to a few years, it is apprehended, the concert cannot be liable to the objections against periodical religious times of human appointment.

III. It is also humbly offered to the consideration of ministers, and others furnished with gifts for the most public instructions, whether it might not be of great use, by the blessing of God, if short and nervous scriptural *persuasives* and *directions to the duty in view, were composed and published* (either by particular authors, or several joining together; which last way might sometimes have peculiar advantages), *and that from time to time*, without too great intervals; the better to keep alive on men's minds a just sense of the obligations to a duty so important in itself, and in which many may be in danger to faint and turn remiss, without such repeated incitements: and *whether it would not also be of great use, if ministers would be pleased to preach frequently on the importance and necessity of prayer for the coming of our Lord's kingdom;* particularly near the quarterly days, or on these days themselves, where there is public worship at that time.

IV. They who have found it incumbent on them to publish this memorial at this time, having peculiar advantages for spreading it, do entreat that the desire of concurrence and assistance contained in it, may by no means be understood as restricted to any particular denomination or party, or to those who are of such or such opinions about any former instances of remarkable religious concern; but to be extended to all, who shall vouchsafe any attention to this paper, and have at heart the interest of vital Christianity, and the power of Godliness; and who, however differing about other things, are convinced of the importance of fervent prayer, to promote that common interest, and Scripture persuasives to promote such prayer.

V. As the first printed account of this concert was not a proposal of it, as a thing then to begin, but a narration of it, as a design already set on foot, which had been brought about with much harmony, by means of private letters; so the farther continuance, and, it is hoped, the farther spreading of it seems in a promising way of being promoted by the same means; as importunate desires of the renewing the concert have been transmitted already from a very distant corner abroad, where the regard to it has of late increased: but notwithstanding of what may be done by private letters, it is humbly expected, that a memorial spread in this manner, may, by God's blessing, farther promote the good ends in view; as it may be usefully referred to in letters, and may reach where they will not.

VI. Whereas in a valuable letter, from the corner just now mentioned as a place where regard to the concert has lately increased, it is proposed, that it should be continued for seven years, or at least for a much longer time than what was specified in the first agreement; those concerned in this memorial,

who would wish rather to receive and spread directions and proposals on this head, than to be the first authors of any, apprehend no inconvenience, for their part, in agreeing to the seven years, with the latitude above described, which reserves liberty to make such circumstantial alterations, as may be hereafter found expedient: on the contrary it seems of importance, that the labor of spreading a concert, which has already extended to so distant parts, and may, it is hoped, extend farther, may not need to be renewed sooner, at least much sooner; as it is uncertain but that may endanger the dropping of it; and it seems probable, there will be less zeal in spreading of it, if the time proposed for its continuance be too inconsiderable. Meantime declarations of concurrence for a less number of years may greatly promote the good ends in view: though it seems very expedient, that it should exceed what was first agreed on; seeing it is found on trial, that that time, instead of being too long, was much too short.

VII. If persons who formerly agreed to this concert, should now discontinue it; would it not look too like that fainting in prayer, against which we are so expressly warned in Scripture? And would not this be the more unsuitable at this time, in any within the British dominions, when they have the united calls of such public chastisements and deliverances, to more concern than ever about public reformation, and consequently about that which is the source of all thorough reformation, the regenerating and sanctifying influence of the Almighty Spirit of God? - August 26, 1746.

The minister in Boston forementioned (to whom most of the copies of this memorial were sent) who, I suppose, has had later and more full intelligence than I have had says, concerning the proposal, in a letter: The motion seems to come from above, and to be wonderfully spreading in Scotland, England, Wales, Ireland, and North America.

PART II.

Motives to a Compliance with what is proposed in the Memorial.

I now proceed to the second thing intended in this discourse, viz., to offer to consideration some things, which may tend to induce the people of God to comply with the proposal and request, made to them in the memorial.

And I desire that the following things may be considered.

1. It is evident from the Scripture, that there is yet remaining a great advancement of the interest of religion and the kingdom of Christ in this world, by an abundant outpouring of the Spirit of God, far greater and more extensive than ever yet has been. It is certain, that many things, which are spoken concerning a glorious time of the church's enlargement and prosperity in the latter days, have never yet been fulfilled. There has never yet been any propagation and prevailing of religion, in any wise, of that extent and universality, which the prophecies represent. It is often foretold and signified, in a great variety of strong expressions, that there should a time come, when all nations through the whole habitable world, should embrace the true religion, and be brought into the church of God. It was often promised to the Patriarchs, that in their seed all the nations, or (as it is sometimes expressed) all the families of the earth should be blessed. (See Gen. xii. 3, xviii. 18, xxii. 18, xxvi. 4, and xxviii. 14.) Agreeably to this, it is said of the Messiah, Psal. lxxii. 11,

that "all nations shall serve him;" and in ver. 17, "men shall be blessed in him, and all nations shall call him blessed." And in Isa. ii. 2, it is said, that "all nations shall flow unto the mountain of the house of the Lord." And Jer. iii 17, that "all nations shall be gathered unto the name of the Lord to Jerusalem, and shall walk no more after the imagination of their evil heart." So it it is said, that *all flesh shall come and worship before the Lord*, Isa. lxvi. 23. And that *all flesh should see the glory of God together*, Isa. xl. 5 And that *all flesh should come to him that hears prayer*, Psal. lxv. 2. Christ compares the *kingdom of heaven in this world to leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, until the whole was leavened*, Matt. xiii. 33. It is natural and reasonable to suppose, that the whole world should finally be given to Christ, as one whose right it is to reign, as the proper heir of him, who is originally the king of all nations, and the possessor of heaven and earth: and the Scripture teaches us, that God the Father hath constituted his Son, as God-man, and in his kingdom of grace, or mediatorial kingdom, to be the heir of the world, that he might in this kingdom have the heathen for his inheritance, and the utmost ends of the earth for his possession; Heb. i. 2, and ii. 8, Psal. ii. 6, 7, 8. Thus Abraham is said to be the heir of the world, not in himself, but in his seed, which is Christ, Rom. iv. 13. And how was this to be fulfilled to Abraham, but by God's fulfilling that great promise, that *in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed?* For that promise is what the apostle is speaking of; which shows, that God has appointed Christ to be the heir of the world in his kingdom of grace, and to possess and reign over all nations, through the propagation of his gospel, and the power of his Spirit communicating the blessings of it. God hath appointed him to this universal dominion by a most solemn oath: Isa. xiv. 23, "I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." Compared with Phil. ii. 10, 11. Though this solemn oath of God the Father is to be understood in so comprehensive a sense, as to extend to what shall be accomplished at the day of judgment, yet it is evident by the foregoing and following verses, that the thing most directly intended, is what shall be fulfilled by the spreading of the gospel of his salvation, and power of the Spirit of grace, bringing "all the ends of the earth to look to him that they may be saved, and come to him for righteousness and strength, that in him they might be justified, and might glory." God has suffered many earthly princes to extend their conquests over a great part of the face of the earth, and to possess a dominion of vast extent, and one monarchy to conquer and succeed another, the latter being still the greater; it is reasonable to suppose that a much greater glory in this respect should be reserved for Christ, God's own Son and rightful heir, who has purchased the dominion by so great and hard a service: it is reasonable to suppose, that his dominion should be far the largest, and his conquests vastly the greatest and most extensive. And thus the Scriptures represent the matter, in Nebuchadnezzar's vision, and the prophet's interpretation, Dan. ii. "There the four great monarchies of the earth, one succeeding another, are represented by the great image of gold, silver, brass, iron and clay; but at last a stone cut out of the mountain without hands, smites the image upon his feet, which breaks the iron, clay, brass, silver and gold in pieces, that all becomes as the chaff of the summer threshing floors, and the wind carries them away, that no place is found for them; but the stone waxes great, becomes a great mountain, and fills the whole earth; signifying the kingdom which the Lord God of heaven should set up in the world, last of all, which should break in pieces and consume all other king-

doms." Surely this representation leads us to suppose, that this last kingdom shall be of vastly greater extent than any of the preceding. The like representation is made in the 7th chap. of Daniel; there the four monarchies are represented by four great beasts, that arose successively, one conquering and subduing another; the fourth and last of these is said to be dreadful, and terrible, and strong exceedingly, and to have great iron teeth, and to devour and break in pieces, and stamp the residue with his feet; yea, it is said, ver. 23, that the kingdom represented by this beast shall devour the whole earth; but last of all one like the Son of Man appears, *coming to the ancient of days, and being brought near before him, and receiving of him a dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him.* This last circumstance, of the vast extent and universality of his dominion, is manifestly spoken of as one thing greatly distinguishing his holy kingdom from all the preceding monarchies: although of one of the former it was said, that it should devour the whole earth, yet we are naturally led, both by the much greater emphasis and strength of the expressions, as well as by the whole connection and tenor of the prophecy, to understand the universality here expressed in a much more extensive and absolute sense: and the terms used in the interpretation of this vision are such, that scarcely any can be devised more strong, to signify an absolute universality of dominion over the inhabitants of the face of the earth: ver. 27, "And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the most high God. Agreeably to this the gospel is represented as *preached unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and tongue, and kindred, and people,* Rev. xiv. 6. The universality of the prevalence of true religion in the latter days, is sometimes expressed by its reaching to "the utmost ends of the earth," Psal. ii. 8. "To all the ends of the earth, and of the world," Psal. xxii. 27—lxvii. 7—xcviii. 3, Isa. xlv. 22. "All the earth, with those that are afar off upon the sea," Psal. lxv. 5. "From the rising of the sun to the going down of the same," Psal. cxiii. 3, Mal. i. 11. "The outgoings of the morning and of the evening," Psal. lxv. 8. It seems that all the most strong expressions, that were in use among the Jews to signify the habitable world in its utmost extent, are made use of to signify the extent of the church of God in the latter days: and in many places, a variety of these expressions is used, and there is an accumulation of them, expressed with great force.

It would be unreasonable to say, these are only bold figures, used after the manner of the eastern nations, to express the great extent of the Christian church, at and after the days of Constantine: to say so would be in effect to say, that it would have been impossible for God, if he had desired it, plainly to have foretold any thing that should absolutely have extended to all nations of the earth. I question whether it be possible to find out a more strong expression, to signify an absolute universality of the knowledge of the true religion through the habitable world, than that in Isa. xi. 9, "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." Which is as much as to say, As there is no place in the vast ocean where there is not water, so there shall be no part of the world of mankind where there is not the knowledge of the Lord; as there is no part of the wide bed or cavity possessed by the sea, but what is covered with water, so there shall be no part of the habitable world that shall not be covered with the light of the gospel, and possessed by the true religion. Waters are often in prophecy put for nations and multitudes of people: so the waters of the main ocean seem sometimes to be put for the inhabitants of the earth in general; as in Ezekiel's vision of waters of the

sanctuary (Ezek. xlvii.), which flowed from the sanctuary, and ran east, until they came to the ocean, and were at first a small stream, but continually increased until they became a great river; and when they came to the sea, the water even of the vast ocean was healed (ver. 8), representing the conversion of the world to the true religion in the latter days. It seems evident, that the time will come, when there will not be one nation remaining in the world, which shall not embrace the true religion, in that God has expressly revealed, that no one such nation shall be left standing on the earth: Isai. lx. 12, "The nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted." God has declared that heathen idolatry and all the worship of false gods shall be wholly abolished, in the most universal manner, so that it shall be continued in no place under the heavens, or upon the face of the earth: Jer. x. 11, "The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens." Ver. 15, "They are vanity, and the work of errors, in the time of their visitation they shall perish." This must be understood as what shall be brought to pass while this earth and these heavens remain, i. e., before the end of the world. Agreeable to this is that, Isa. liv. 1, 2, "Sing, O barren, and thou that didst not bear; for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord; enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thy habitation; spare not; lengthen thy cords, strengthen thy stakes." Ver. 5, "For thy Maker is thy husband; the Lord of Hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall he be called."

The prophecies of the New Testament do no less evidently show, that a time will come when the gospel shall universally prevail, and the kingdom of Christ be extended over the whole habitable earth, in the most proper sense. Christ says, John xii. 32, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." It is fit, that when the Son of God becomes man, he should have dominion over all mankind: it is fit that since he became an inhabitant of the earth, and shed his blood on the earth, he should possess the whole earth: it is fit, seeing here he became a servant, and was subject to men, and was arraigned before them, and judged, condemned and executed by them, and suffered ignominy and death in a most public manner, before Jews and Gentiles, being lifted up to view on the cross upon a hill, near that populous city Jerusalem, at a most public time, when there were many hundred thousand spectators, from all parts, that he should be rewarded with a universal dominion over mankind; and it is here declared he shall be. The apostle, in the 11th of Romans, teaches us to look to that great outpouring of the Spirit, and ingathering of souls into Christ's kingdom, that was in those days, first of the Jews, and then of the Gentiles, to be but as the first fruits of the intended harvest, both with regard to Jews and Gentiles, and to look on the ingathering of those first fruits as a sign that all the remainder, both Jews and Gentiles, should in due time be gathered in: ver. 16, "For if the first fruit be holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root be holy, so are the branches." And in that context, the apostle speaks of the fulness of both Jews and Gentiles, as what shall hereafter be brought in, as distinct from that ingathering from among both, that was in those primitive ages of Christianity: in ver. 12, we read of the fulness of the Jews, and in the 25th of the fulness of the Gentiles: and there in ver. 30, 31, 32, the apostle teaches us to look upon that infidelity and darkness, that first prevailed over all Gentile nations, before Christ came, and then over the Jews after Christ came, as what was wisely permitted of God, as a preparation for the manifestation of the glory

of God's mercy, in due time, on the whole world, constituted of Jews and Gentiles. *God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.* These things plainly show, that the time is coming when the whole world of mankind shall be brought into the church of Christ; and not only a part of the Jews, and a part of the Gentile world, as the first fruits, as it was in the first ages of the Christian church; but the fulness of both, the whole lump, all the nation of the Jews, and all the world of Gentiles.

In the last great conflict between the church of Christ and her enemies, before the commencement of the glorious time of the church's peace and rest, *the kings of the earth, and the whole world, are represented as gathered together*, Rev. xvi. 14, and then the "seventh angel pours out his vial into the air," which limits that kingdom that Satan has, as god of this world, in its utmost extent; and that kingdom is represented as utterly overthrown, ver. 17, &c And in another description of that great battle, chap. xix., Christ is represented as riding forth, having on his head many crowns, and on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, *King of kings, and Lord of lords.* Which we may well suppose signifies, that he is now going to that conquest, whereby he shall set up a kingdom, in which he shall be King of kings, in a far more extensive manner than either the Babylonish, Persian, Grecian, or Roman monarchs were. And in ver. 17, and following, "an angel appears standing in the sun, that overlooks the whole world, calling on all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, to come and eat the flesh of kings," &c. And in consequence of the great victory Christ gains at that time, *an angel comes down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand, and lays hold on the devil, and binds him, and casts him into the bottomless pit, and shuts him up, and sets a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more.* Satan, being dispossessed of that highest monarchy on earth, the Roman empire, and cast out in the time of Constantine, is represented, chap. xii., by his being cast down from heaven to the earth: but now there is something far beyond that; he is cast out of the earth, and is shut up in hell, and confined to that alone, so that he has no place left him in this world of mankind, high nor low.

Now will any be so unreasonable as to say, that all these things do not signify more than that one third part of the world should be brought into the church of Christ; beyond which it cannot be pretended that the Christian religion has ever yet reached, in its greatest extent? Those countries, which belonged to the Roman empire, that were brought to the profession of Christianity, after the reign of Constantine, are but a small part of what the habitable world now is; as to extent of ground, they all together bear, I suppose, no greater proportion to it, than the land of Canaan did to the Roman empire. And our Redeemer in his kingdom of grace has hitherto possessed but a little part of the world, in its most flourishing state, since arts are risen to their greatest height; and a very great part of the world is but lately discovered, and much remains undiscovered to this day.

These things make it very evident, that the main fulfilment of those prophecies, that speak of the glorious advancement of Christ's kingdom on earth, is still to come.

And as there has been nothing as yet, with regard to the flourishing of religion, and the advancement of Christ's kingdom, of such extent as to answer the prophecies, so neither has there been any thing of that duration, that is foretold.—The prophecies speak of Jerusalem's being made *the joy of the whole earth*, and also the *joy of many generations* (Psal. xlviii. 2, Isa. lx. 15). That *God's people should long enjoy the work of their hands* (Isa. lxv. 22). That

they should *reign with Christ a thousand years* (Rev. xx.), by which we must at least understand a very long time. But it would be endless to mention all the places, which signify that the time of the church's great peace and prosperity should be of long continuance: almost all the prophecies that speak of her latter day glory, imply it; and it is implied in very many of them, that when once this day of the church's advancement and peace is begun, it shall never end, till the world ends; or, at least, that there shall be no more a return of her troubles and adversity for any considerable continuance; that then *the days of her mourning shall be ended;* that her tribulations *should then be as the waters of Noah unto God, that as he has sworn that the waters of Noah should no more pass over the earth, so he will swear that he will no more be wroth with his people, or rebuke them;* that *God's people should no more walk after the imagination of their evil heart;* that *God would hide himself no more from the house of Israel, because he has poured out his Spirit upon them;* that *their sun should no more go down, nor the moon withdraw itself;* that *the light should not be clear and dark* (i. e. there should be no more an interchange of light and darkness, as used to be), but that it *should be* all *one* continued *day; not day and night* (for so the words are in the original in Zech. xiv. 7) alternately, *but it shall come to pass, that at evening time* (i. e. at the time that night and darkness used to be) *it shall be light;* and that *the nations should beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks, and that nation shall not lift up sword against nation, nor learn war any more;* but that there *should be abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth.* And innumerable things of this nature are declared.

But the church of Christ has never yet enjoyed a state of peace and prosperity for any long time; on the contrary, the times of her rest, and of the flourishing state of religion, have ever been very short. Hitherto the church may say as in Isa. lxiii. 17, 18, "Return, for thy servants' sake, the tribes of thine inheritance; the people of thy holiness have possessed it but a little while." The quietness that the church of God enjoyed after the beginning of Constantine's reign, was very short; the peace the empire enjoyed, in freedom from war, was not more than twenty years; no longer nor greater than it had enjoyed under some of the heathen emperors. After this the empire was rent in pieces by intestine wars, and wasted almost everywhere by the invasions and incursions of barbarous nations, and the Christian world was soon all in contention and confusion, by heresies and divisions in matters of religion. And the church of Christ has never as yet been, for any long time, free from persecution; especially when truth has prevailed, and true religion flourished. It is manifest, that hitherto the people of God have been kept under, and Zion has been in a low afflicted state, and her enemies have had the chief sway.

And another thing, that makes it exceeding manifest that that day of the church's greatest advancement on earth, which is foretold in Scripture, has never yet come, is, that it is so plainly and expressly revealed that this day should succeed the last of the four monarchies, even the Roman, in its last state, wherein it is divided into ten kingdoms, and after the destruction of Antichrist, signified by the little horn, whose reign is contemporary with the reign of the ten kings. These things are very plain in the 2d and 7th chapters of Daniel, and also in the Revelation of St. John. And it is also plain by the 11th chapter of Romans, that it shall be after the national conversion of the *Jews, which shall be as life from the dead to the Gentiles,* and the *fulness of both Jews and Gentiles should be come in,* and all the nation of the Jews and all other nations shall obtain mercy, and there shall be that general ingathering of the harvest of the whole earth, of which all that had been converted before, either of Jews

or Gentiles, were but the first fruits. And many other evidences of this point might be mentioned, which for brevity's sake I omit.

And thus it is meet, that the last kingdom which shall take place on earth, should be the kingdom of God's own Son and heir, whose right it is to rule and reign; and that whatever revolutions and confusions there may be in the world, for a long time, the cause of truth, the righteous cause, should finally prevail, and God's holy people should at last inherit the earth, and reign on earth; and that the world should continue in tumults and great revolutions, following one another, from age to age, the world being as it were in travail, until truth and holiness are brought forth; that all things should be shaken, until that comes which is true and right, and agreeable to the mind of God, which cannot be shaken; and that the wisdom of the Ruler of the world should be manifested in the bringing all things ultimately to so good an issue. The world is made for the Son of God; his kingdom is the end of all changes, that come to pass in the state of the world of mankind; all are only to prepare the way for this; it is fit therefore that the last kingdom on earth should be his. It is wisely and mercifully ordered of God that it should be so, on this account as well as many others, viz., that the church of God under all preceding changes, should have this consideration to encourage her, and maintain her hope, and animate her faith and prayers, from generation to generation, that God has promised, her cause should finally be maintained and prevail in this world.

Let it now be considered,

2. The future promised advancement of the kingdom of Christ is an event unspeakably happy and glorious. The Scriptures speak of that time, as a time wherein God and His Son Jesus Christ will be most eminently glorified on earth; a time, wherein God, who until then had dwelt between the cherubims, and concealed himself in the holy of holies, in the secret of his tabernacle, behind the vail, in the thick darkness, should openly shine forth, and all flesh should see his glory, and God's people in general have as great a privilege as the high priest alone had once a year, or as Moses had in the mount; a time, wherein *the temple of God in heaven should be opened, and there should be seen the ark of His testament* (Rev. xi. 19); a time, wherein both God will be greatly glorified, and his saints made unspeakably happy in the view of his glory; a time wherein God's people should not only once see the light of God's glory, as Moses, or see it once a year with the high priest, but should dwell and walk continually in it, and it should be their constant daily light, instead of the light of the sun (Isa. ii. 5, Psal. lxxxix. 15, Isa. lx. 19), which light should be so much more glorious than the light of the sun or moon, that *the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts should reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem before his ancients gloriously*, Isa. xxiv. 23.

It is represented as a time of vast increase of knowledge and understanding, especially in divine things; a time wherein God would "destroy the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail spread over all nations," Isa. xxv. 7; wherein "the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun seven-fold," Isa. xxx. 26. "And the eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the heart of the rash shall understand knowledge," Isa. xxxii. 3, 4. "And they shall no more teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, because they shall know him from the least to the greatest," Jer. xxxi. 34. And a time of general holiness: Isa. lx. 21, "Thy people shall be all righteous." And a time of a great prevailing of eminent holiness, when little children should, in spiritual attainments, be as though they were "a hundred years old," Isa. lxv. 20. And wherein "he

that is feeble among God's people should be as David," Zech. xii. 8. A time wherein holiness should be as it were inscribed on every thing, on all men's common business and employments, and the common utensils of life, all shall be dedicated to God, and improved to holy purposes: Isa. xxiii. 18, "And her merchandise and hire shall be holiness to the Lord." Zech. xiv. 20, 21, "In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, Holiness unto the Lord; and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar; yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of Hosts." A time wherein religion and true Christianity shall in every respect be uppermost in the world; wherein God will cause his church to *arise and shake herself from the dust, and put on her beautiful garments, and sit down on a throne;* and *the poor shall be raised from the dust, and the beggar from the dunghill, and shall be set among princes, and made to inherit the throne of God's glory.* A time wherein vital piety shall take possession of thrones and palaces, and those that are in most exalted stations shall be eminent in holiness: Isa. xlix. 23, "And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers." Chap. lx. 16, "Thou shalt suck the breasts of kings." Isa. xlv. 12, "The daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift, the rich among the people shall entreat thy favor." A time of wonderful union, and the most universal peace, love, and sweet harmony; wherein the nations shall *beat their swords into ploughshares*, &c., and God will *cause wars to cease to the ends of the earth, and break the bow, and cut the spear in sunder, and burn the chariot in the fire; and the mountains shall bring forth peace to God's people, and the little hills by righteousness;* wherein *the wolf should dwell with the lamb*, &c., and wherein *God's people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and quiet resting places*, Isa. xxxii. 17, 18, and xxxiii. 20, 21. A time wherein all heresies and false doctrines shall be exploded, and the church of God shall not be rent with a variety of jarring opinions. Zech. xiv. 9, "The Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day there shall be one Lord, and his name one." And all superstitious ways of worship shall be abolished, and all agree in worshipping God in his own appointed way, and agreeable to the purity of his institutions: Jer. xxxii. 39, "I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me forever, for the good of them and their children after them;" a time wherein the whole earth shall be united as one holy city, one heavenly family, men of all nations shall as it were dwell together, and sweetly correspond one with another, as brethren and children of the same father; as the prophecies often speak of all God's people at that time as the children of God, and brethren one to another, all *appointing over them one head*, gathered to one *house of God, to worship the King, the Lord of hosts;* a time wherein this whole great society shall appear in glorious beauty, in genuine amiable Christianity, and excellent order, as *a city compact together, the perfection of beauty, an eternal excellency* shining with a reflection of the glory of Jehovah *risen upon it*, which shall be attractive and ravishing to all kings and nations, and it shall appear *as a bride adorned for her husband;* a time of great temporal prosperity; of great health: Isa. xxxiii. 24, "The inhabitants shall not say, I am sick;" of long life: Isa. lxv. 22, "As the days of a tree, are the days of my people;" a time wherein the earth shall be abundantly fruitful, Psal. lxvii. 6, Isa. xxx. 23, 24, Amos ix. 16, and many other places. A time wherein the world shall be delivered from that multitude of sore calamities that before had prevailed (Ezek. xlvii. 20), and there shall be a universal blessing of God upon mankind, in soul and body, in all their concerns, and all manner of tokens of God's presence and favor, and *God shall rejoice over them as a bridegroom re-*

joiceth over his bride, and *the mountains shall as it were drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk*, Joel iii. 18. A time of great and universal joy through the earth, when *from the utmost ends of the earth shall be heard songs, even glory to the righteous*, and God's people shall with joy draw water out of the wells of salvation, and God shall prepare in his holy mountain, a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined, which feast is represented, Rev. xix., as *the marriage supper of the Lamb.* Yea, the Scriptures represent it not only as a time of universal joy on earth, but extraordinary joy in heaven, among the angels and saints, the holy apostles and prophets there, Rev. xviii. 20, and xix. 1—9. Yea, the Scriptures represent it as a time of extraordinary rejoicing with Christ himself, the glorious head, in whom all things in heaven and earth shall then be gathered together in one: Zech. iii. 17, "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save; he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love; he will joy over thee with singing." And the very fields, trees and mountains, shall then as it were rejoice, and break forth into singing: Isa. lv. 12, "Ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands." Isa. xliv. 23, "Sing, O heavens, for the Lord hath done it; shout, ye lower parts of the earth; break forth into singing, ye mountains; O forests and every tree therein; for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel."

Such being the state of things in this future promised glorious day of the church's prosperity, surely it is worth praying for. Nor is there any one thing whatsoever, if we viewed things aright, which a regard to the glory of God, a concern for the kingdom and honor of our Redeemer, a love to his people, pity to perishing sinners, love to our fellow creatures in general, compassion to mankind under its various and sore calamities and miseries, a desire of their temporal and spiritual prosperity, love to our country, our neighbors and friends, yea, and to our own souls, would dispose us to be so much in prayer for, as for the dawning of this happy day, and the accomplishment of that glorious event.

It may be worthy to be considered,

3. How much Christ prayed and labored and suffered in order to the glory and happiness of that day.

The sum of the blessings Christ sought, by what he did and suffered in the work of redemption, was the *Holy Spirit*. So is the affair of our redemption constituted; the Father provides and gives the Redeemer, and the price of redemption is offered to him, and he grants the benefit purchased; the Son is the Redeemer that gives the price, and also is the price offered; and the Holy Spirit is the grand blessing obtained by the price offered, and bestowed on the redeemed. The Holy Spirit, in his indwelling, his influences and fruits, is the sum of all grace, holiness, comfort and joy; or in one word, of all the spiritual good Christ purchased for men in this world, and is also the sum of all perfection, glory and eternal joy, that he purchased for them in another world. The Holy Spirit is that great benefit, that is the subject matter of the promises, both of the eternal covenant of redemption, and also of the covenant of grace; the grand subject of the promises of the Old Testament, in the prophecies of the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom; and the chief subject of the promises of the New Testament; and particularly of the covenant of grace delivered by Jesus Christ to his disciples, as his last will and testament, in the 14th, 15th, and 16th chapters of John; the grand legacy that he bequeathed to them in that his last and dying discourse with them. Therefore the Holy Spirit is so often call-

ed the Spirit of promise, and emphatically the promise, the promise of the Father, &c., Luke xxiv. 49, Acts i. 4, and ii. 33, 39, Gal. iii. 14, Eph. i. 13, and iii. 6. This being the great blessing Christ purchased by his labors and sufferings on earth, it was the blessing he received of the Father, when he ascended into heaven, and entered into the holy of holies with his own blood, to communicate to those that he had redeemed. John xvi. 7, "It is expedient for you, that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." Acts ii. 33, "Being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear." This is the sum of those gifts, which Christ received for men, even for the rebellious, at his ascension. This is the sum of the benefits Christ obtains for men by his intercession: John xiv. 16, 17, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of Truth." Herein consists Christ's communicative fulness, even in his being full of the Spirit, and so full of grace and truth, that we might of this fulness receive, and grace for grace. He is anointed with the Holy Ghost; and this is the ointment that goes down from the head to the members. God gives the Spirit not by measure unto him, that every one that is his might receive according to the measure of the gift of Christ. This therefore was the great blessing he prayed for in that wonderful prayer, that he uttered for his disciples and all his future church, the evening before he died, John xvii: the blessing he prayed for to the Father, in behalf of his disciples, was the same he had insisted on his preceding discourse with them: and this doubtless was the blessing that he prayed for, when, as our High Priest, he offered up strong crying and tears, with his blood, Heb. v. 6, 7. The same that he shed his blood for, he also shed tears for, and poured out prayers for.

But the time that we have been speaking of, is the chief time of the bestowment of this blessing; the main season of the success of all that Christ did and suffered in the work of our redemption. Before this the Spirit of God is given but very sparingly, and but few are saved; but then it will be far otherwise; wickedness shall be rare then, as virtue and piety had been before: and undoubtedly, by far the greatest number of them that ever receive the benefits of Christ's redemption, from the beginning of the world to the end of it, will receive it in that time. The number of the inhabitants of the earth will doubtless then be vastly multiplied; and the number of redeemed ones much more.

If we should suppose that glorious day to last no more than (literally) a thousand years, and that at the beginning of that thousand years the world of mankind should be but just as numerous as it is now, and that the number should be doubled, during that time of great health and peace and the universal blessing of heaven, once only in a hundred years, the number at the end of a thousand years would be more than a thousand times greater than it is now; and if it should be doubled once in fifty years (which probably the number of the inhabitants of New England has ordinarily been, in about half that time), then, at the end of the thousand years, there would be more than a million inhabitants on the face of the earth where there is one now. And there is reason to think that through the greater part of this period at least, the number of saints will, in their increase, bear a proportion to the increase of the number of inhabitants. And it must be considered, that if the number of mankind at the beginning of this period be no more than equal to the present number, yet we may doubtless conclude, that the number of true saints will be immensely greater; when instead of the few true and thorough Christians now in some few countries, every

nation on the face of the whole earth shall be converted to Christianity, and every country shall be full of true Christians; so that the successive multiplication of true saints through the thousand years, will begin with that vast advantage, beyond the multiplication of mankind; where the latter is begun from units, the other doubtless will begin with hundreds, if not thousands. How much greater then will be the number of true converts, that will be brought to a participation of the benefits of Christ's redemption, during that period, than in all other times put together! I think, the foregoing things considered, we shall be very moderate in our conjectures, if we say, it is probable that there will be a hundred thousand times more, that will be actually redeemed to God by Christ's blood, during that period of the church's prosperity that we have been speaking of, than ever had been before, from the beginning of the world to that time.

That time is represented in Scripture, as the proper appointed season of Christ's salvation; eminently the elect season, *the accepted time* and *day of salvation* (Isai. xlix. 8, and so on to ver. 23, and chap. lxi. 2, taken with the context, in that and the preceding and following chapters). *The year of Christ's redeemed*, Isa. lxiii. 4. This period is spoken of as the proper time of the dominion of the Redeemer, and reign of his redeeming love, in the 2d and 7th chapters of Daniel, and many other places; the proper time of his harvest, or ingathering of his fruits from this fallen world; the appointed day of his triumph over Satan, the great destroyer; and the appointed day of his marriage with his elect spouse, Rev. xix. 7. The time given to the Sun of righteousness to rule, as the day is the time God has appointed for the natural sun to bear rule. Therefore the bringing on of this time is called Christ's coming in his kingdom; wherein *he will rend the heavens and come down*, and *the Sun of righteousness shall arise*, Mal. iv. 2, and Isa. lx. 1.

The comparatively little saving good there is in the world, as the fruit of Christ's redemption, before that time, is, as it were, granted by way of anticipation; as we anticipate something of the sun's light by reflection before the daytime, the proper time of the sun's rule; and as the first fruits are gathered before the harvest. Then more especially will be the fulfilment of those great promises, made by God the Father to the Son, for his pouring out his soul unto death, Isa. liii. 16, 11, 12; then "shall he see his seed, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand: then shall he see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied, and shall justify many by his knowledge; then will God divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong;" then shall Christ in an eminent manner obtain his chosen spouse, that "he loved and died for, that he might sanctify and cleanse her, with the washing of water, by the word, and present her to himself a glorious church." He will obtain "the joy that was set before him, for which he endured the cross, and despised the shame," chiefly in the events and consequences of that day: that day, as was observed before, is often represented as eminently the time of the rejoicing of the bridegroom. The foreknowledge and consideration of it was what supported him, and that which his soul exulted in, at a time when his soul had been troubled at the view of his approaching sufferings; as may be seen in John xii. 23, 24, 27, 31, 32.

Now therefore, if it be so, that this is what Jesus Christ, our great Redeemer and the head of the church, did so much desire, and set his heart upon, from all eternity, and which he did and suffered so much for, offering up strong crying and tears, and his precious blood to obtain it; surely his disciples and members should also earnestly seek it, and be much and earnest in prayer for it.

Let it be considered,

4. The whole creation is, as it were, earnestly waiting for that day, and constantly groaning and travailing in pain to bring forth the felicity and glory of it. For that day is above all other times, excepting the day of judgment, the day of the manifestation of the sons of God, and of their glorious liberty: and therefore that elegant representation the apostle makes of the earnest expectation and travail of the creation, in Rom. viii. 19—22, is applicable to the glorious events of this day: "The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." This visible world has now for many ages been subjected to sin, and made as it were a servant to it, through the abusive improvement that man, who has the dominion over the creatures, puts the creatures to. Thus the sun is a sort of servant to all manner of wickedness, as its light and other beneficial influences are abused by men, and made subservient to their lusts and sinful purposes. So of the rain, and fruits of the earth, and the brute animals, and all other parts of the visible creation; they all serve men's corruption, and obey their sinful will; and God doth in a sort subject them to it; for he continues his influence and power to make them to be obedient, according to the same law of nature whereby they yield to men's command when used to good purposes. It is by the immediate influence of God upon things, acting upon them, according to those constant methods that we call the laws of nature, that they are ever obedient to man's will, or that we can use them at all. This influence of God continues, to make them obedient to men's will, though wicked. Which is a sure sign that the present state of things is not lasting: it is confusion; and God would not suffer it to be, but that he designs in a little time to put an end to it, when it shall no more be so. Seeing it is to be but a little while, God chooses rather to subject the creature to man's wickedness, than to disturb and interrupt the course of nature according to its stated laws: but it is, as it were, a force upon the creature; for the creature is abused in it, perverted to far meaner purposes than those for which the author of its nature made it, and to which he adapted it. The creature therefore is as it were unwillingly subject; and would not be subject, but that it is but for a short time; and it, as it were, hopes for an alteration. It is a bondage the creature is subject to, from which it was partly delivered when Christ came, and the gospel was promulgated in the world; and will be more fully delivered at the commencement of the glorious day we are speaking of; and perfectly at the day of judgment. This agrees with the context; for the apostle was speaking of the present suffering state of the church. The reason why the church in this world is in a suffering state, is that the world is subjected to the sin and corruption of mankind. By vanity, in Scripture, is very commonly meant sin and wickedness; and also by corruption, as might be shown in very many places, would my intended brevity allow.

Though the creature is thus subject to vanity, yet it does not rest in this subjection, but is constantly acting and exerting itself, in order to that glorious liberty that God has appointed at the time we are speaking of, and as it were reaching forth towards it. All the changes that are brought to pass in the world, from age to age, are ordered in infinite wisdom in one respect or other to prepare the way for that glorious issue of things, that shall be when truth and righteousness shall finally prevail, and he, whose right it is, shall take the king-

dom. All the creatures, in all their operations and motions, continually tend to this. As in a clock, all the motions of the whole system of wheels and movements, tend to the striking of the hammer at the appointed time. All the revolutions and restless motions of the sun and other heavenly bodies, from day to day, from year to year, and from age to age, are continually tending hither; as all the many turnings of the wheels of a chariot, in a journey, tend to the appointed journey's end. The mighty struggles and conflicts of nations, and shakings of kingdoms, and those vast successive changes that are brought to pass, in the kingdoms and empires of the world, from one age to another, are as it were travail pangs of the creation, in order to bring forth this glorious event. And the Scriptures represent the last struggles and changes that shall immediately precede this event, as being the greatest of all; as the last pangs of a woman in travail are the most violent.

The creature thus earnestly expecting this glorious manifestation and liberty of the children of God, and travailing in pain in order to it, therefore the Scriptures, by a like figure, do very often represent, that when this shall be accomplished, the whole inanimate creation shall greatly rejoice: that the *heavens shall sing, the earth be glad, the mountains break forth into singing, the hills be joyful together, the trees clap their hands, the lower parts of the earth shout, the sea roar and the fulness thereof, and the floods clap their hands*, Isa. xliv. 23, xlix. 13, Psal. lxix. 34, 35, xcvi. 11, 12, and xcviii. 7, 8.

All the intelligent elect creation, all God's holy creatures in heaven and earth, are truly and properly waiting for, and earnestly expecting that event. It is abundantly represented in Scripture as the spirit and character of all true saints, that they set their hearts upon, love, long, wait and pray for the promised glory of that day; they are spoken of as those that prefer Jerusalem *to their chief joy*, Psal. cxxxvii. 6. *That take pleasure in the stones of Zion, and favor the dust thereof*, Psal. cii. 13, 14. *That wait for the consolation of Israel*, Luke ii. 25, and v. 38. It is the language of the church of God, and the breathing of the soul of every true saint, that we have in Psal. xiv. 7, "O that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! when the Lord bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad." And Cant. ii. 17, "Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved, and be thou like a roe, or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether." And chap. viii. 14, "Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe, or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices." Agreeable to this, was the spirit of old Jacob, which he expressed when he was dying, in faith in the great promise made to him and Isaac and Abraham, that "in their seed all the families of the earth should be blessed:" Gen. xlix. 18, "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord." The same is represented as the spirit of his true children, or the family of Jacob: Isa. viii. 17, "I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth himself from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him." They that love Christ's appearing, is a name that the apostle gives to true Christians, 2 Tim. iv. 8.

The glorious inhabitants of the heavenly world, the saints and angels there, that rejoice when one sinner repents, are earnestly waiting, in an assured and joyful dependence on God's promises of that conversion of the world, and marriage of the Lamb, which shall be when that glorious day comes; and therefore they are represented as all with one accord rejoicing and praising God with such mighty exultation and triumph, when it is accomplished, in Rev. xix.

5. The word of God is full of precepts, encouragements, and examples, tending to excite and induce the people of God to be much in prayer for this mercy.

The Spirit of God is the chief of the blessings, that are the subject matter of Christian prayer; for it is the sum of all spiritual blessings; which are those that we need infinitely more than all others, and are those wherein our true and eternal happiness consists. That which is the sum of the blessings that Christ purchased, is the sum of the blessings that Christians have to pray for; but that, as was observed before, is the Holy Spirit: and therefore when the disciples came to Christ, and desired him to teach them to pray, Luke xi., and he accordingly gave them particular directions for the performance of this duty, the conclusion of his whole discourse in the 13th verse plainly shows that the Holy Spirit is the sum of the blessings that are the subject matter of that prayer about which he had instructed them: "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" For which words of Christ, we may also observe, that there is no blessing that we have so great encouragement to pray for, as the Spirit of God; the words imply that our heavenly Father is especially ready to bestow his Holy Spirit on them that ask him. Of the more excellent nature any benefit is that we stand in need of, the more ready God is to bestow it in answer to prayer: the infinite goodness of God's nature is the more gratified, and the grand design and aim of the contrivance and work of our redemption is the more answered, and Jesus Christ, the Redeemer, has the greater success in his undertaking and labors; and those desires that are expressed in prayer for the most excellent blessings are the most excellent desires, and consequently such as God most approves, and is most ready to gratify.

The Scriptures do not only direct and encourage us in general to pray for the Holy Spirit above all things else, but it is the expressly revealed will of God, that his church should be very much in prayer for that glorious outpouring of the Spirit that is to be in the latter days, and the things that shall be accomplished by it. God, speaking of that blessed event, Ezek. xxxvi., under the figure of "cleansing the house of Israel from all their iniquities, planting and building their waste and ruined places, and making them to become like the garden of Eden, and filling them with men like a flock, like the holy flock, the flock of Jerusalem in her solemn feasts" (wherein he doubtless has respect to the same glorious restoration and advancement of his church that is spoken of in the next chapter, and in all the following chapters to the end of the book), says, ver. 37: "Thus saith the Lord, I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them." Which doubtless implies that it is the will of God that extraordinary prayerfulness in his people for this mercy should precede the bestowment of it.

I know of no place in the Bible, where so strong an expression is made use of to signify importunity in prayer, as is used in Isa. lxii. 6, 7, where the people of God are called upon to be importunate for this mercy: "Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give him no rest, until he establish, and until he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth." How strong is the praise! And how loud is this call to the church of God, to be fervent and incessant in their cries to him for this great mercy! How wonderful are the words to be used, concerning the manner in which such worms of the dust should address the high and lofty One that inhabits eternity! And what encouragement is here, to approach the mercy seat with the greatest freedom, boldness, earnestness, constancy and full assurance of faith, to seek of God this greatest thing that can be sought in Christian prayer!

It is a just observation of a certain eminent minister of the church of Scotland, in a discourse of his, lately published on social prayer, in which, speaking

of pleading for the success of the gospel, as required by the Lord's prayer, he says, "That notwithstanding of its being so compendious, yet the one half of it, that is, three petitions in six, and these the first prescribed, do all relate to this great case: so that to put up any of these petitions apart, or all of them together, is upon the matter, to pray that the dispensation of the gospel may be blessed with divine power." That glorious day we are speaking of is the proper and appointed time, above all others, for the bringing to pass the things requested in each of these petitions. As the prophecies everywhere represent that as the time, which God has especially appointed for the hallowing or glorifying his own great name in this world, causing his glory to be revealed, that all flesh may see it together, causing it openly to be manifested in the sight of the heathen, filling the whole world with the light of his glory to such a degree that the moon shall be confounded and sun ashamed before that brighter glory. the appointed time for the glorifying and magnifying the name of Jesus Christ, causing every knee to bow, and every tongue to confess to him. This is the proper time of God's kingdom's coming, or of Christ's coming in his kingdom: that is the very time foretold in the 2d of Daniel, when the Lord God of heaven shall set up a kingdom, in the latter times of the last monarchy, when it is divided into ten kingdoms: and that is the very time foretold in the 7th of Daniel, when there should be given to one like to the Son of man, dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve him; and the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the most high God after the destruction of the little horn, that should continue for a time, times, and the dividing of time. And that is the time wherein God's will shall be done on earth, as it is done in heaven; when heaven shall as it were be bowed, and come down to the earth, as God's people shall be all righteous, and holiness to the Lord shall be written on the bells of the horses, &c. So that the three first petitions of the Lord's prayer are in effect no other than requests for the bringing on this glorious day. And as the Lord's prayer begins with asking for this, in the three first petitions, so it concludes with it, in these words, *For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever. Amen.* Which words imply a request that God would take to himself his great power, and reign, and manifest his power and glory in the world. Thus Christ teaches us that it becomes his disciples to seek this above all other things, and make it the first and the last in their prayers, and that every petition should be put up in a subordination to the advancement of God's kingdom and glory in the world.

Besides what has been observed of the Lord's prayer, if we look through the whole Bible, and observe all the examples of prayer that we find there recorded, we shall find so many prayers for no other mercy, as for the deliverance, restoration and prosperity of the church, and the advancement of God's glory and kingdom of grace in the world. If we well consider the prayers that we find recorded in the book of Psalms, I believe we shall see reason to think, that a very great, if not the greater part of them, are prayers uttered, either in the name of Christ, or in the name of the church, for such a mercy: and undoubtedly the greatest part of that book of Psalms, is made up of prayers for this mercy, prophecies of it, and prophetical praises for it.

The prophets, in their prophecies of the restoration and advancement of the church, very often speak of it as what shall be done in answer to the prayers of God's people. Isa. xxv. 9, xxvi. 9, 12, 13, 16, 17, to the end, chap. xxxiii. 2, Psal. cii. 13—22, Jer. iii. 21, Isa. lxv. 24, xli. 17, Hos. v. 15, with vi. 1, 2, 3, and xiv. 2, to the end, Zech. x. 6, xii. 10 and xiii. 9, Isa. lv. 6, with

verses 12, 13, Jer. xxxiii. 3. The prophecies of future glorious times of the church are often introduced with a prayer of the church for her deliverance and advancement, prophetically uttered; as in Isa. li. 9, &c., chap. lxiii. 11, to the end, and lxiv. throughout.

In order to Christ's being mystically born into the world, in the advancement and flourishing of true religion, and great increase of the number of true converts, who are spoken of as having Christ formed in them, the Scriptures represent it as requisite that the church should first be in travail, crying, and pained to be delivered, Rev. xii. 1, 2, 5. And one thing that we have good reason to understand by it, is her exercising strong desires, and wrestling and agonizing with God in prayer, for this event; because we find such figures of speech used in this sense elsewhere; so, Gal. iv. 19, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you." Isa. xxvi. 16, 17, "Lord, in trouble have they visited thee; they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them. Like a woman with child, that draweth near the time of her delivery, is in pain, and crieth out in her pangs, so have we been in thy sight, O Lord." And certainly it is fit, that the church of God should be in travail for that, which (as I before observed) the whole creation travails in pain for.

The Scriptures do not only abundantly manifest it to be the duty of God's people to be much in prayer for this great mercy, but it also abounds with manifold considerations to encourage them in it, and animate them with hopes of success. There is perhaps no one thing that so much of the Bible is taken up in the promises of, in order to encourage the faith, hope and prayers of the saints, as this; which at once affords to God's people the clearest evidences that it is their duty to be much in prayer for this mercy (for undoubtedly that which God does abundantly make the subject of his promises, God's people should abundantly make the subject of their prayers), and also affords them the strongest assurances that their prayers shall be successful. With what confidence may we go before God, and pray for that, of which we have so many exceeding precious and glorious promises to plead! The very first promise of God to fallen man, even that in Gen. iii. 15, "It shall bruise thy head," is a promise that is to have its chief fulfilment at that day. And the whole Bible concludes with a promise of the glory of that day, and a prayer for its fulfilment. Rev. xxii. 20, "He that testifieth these things, saith, Surely I come quickly: Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

The Scripture gives us great reason to think, that when once there comes to appear much of a spirit of prayer in the church of God for this mercy, then it will soon be accomplished. It is evidently with reference to this mercy, that God makes that promise, Isa. xli. 17, 18, 19, "When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them; I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them; I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water; I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle and the oil tree, I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine, and the box tree together." Spiritual waters and rivers are explained by the Apostle John, to be the Holy Spirit, John vii. 37, 38, 39. It is now a time of scarcity of these spiritual waters; there are as it were none: if God's people, in this time of great drought, were but made duly sensible of this calamity, and their own emptiness and necessity, and brought earnestly to thirst and cry for needed supplies, God would doubtless soon fulfil this blessed promise. We have another promise much like this,

in Psal. cii. 16, 17: "When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory; he will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer." And remarkable are the words that follow in the next verse, "This shall be written for the generation to come; and the people which shall be created, shall praise the Lord." Which seems to signify, that this promise should be left on record to encourage some future generation of God's people to pray and cry earnestly for this mercy, to whom he would fulfil the promise, and thereby give them, and great multitudes of others, that should be converted through their prayers, occasion to praise his name. Who knows but that the generation here spoken of may be this present generation? One thing mentioned in the character of that future generation, is certainly true concerning the present, viz., that it is destitute; the church of God is in very low, sorrowful and needy circumstances: and if the next thing there supposed, were also verified in us, viz., that we were made sensible of our great calamity, and brought to cry earnestly to God for help, I am persuaded the third would be also verified, viz., that our prayers would be turned into joyful praises, for God's gracious answers to our prayers. It is spoken of as a sign and evidence, that the time to favor Zion is come, when God's servants are brought by their prayerfulness for her restoration, in an eminent manner, to show that they favor her stones and dust, in the 13th and 14th verses of this Psalm: "Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion; for the time to favor her, yea, the set time is come; for thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favor the dust thereof."

God has respect to the prayers of his saints in all his government of the world; as we may observe by the representation made Rev. viii. at the beginning. There we read of several angels standing before the throne of God, and receiving of him seven trumpets, at the sounding of which, great and mighty changes were to be brought to pass in the world, through many successive ages. But when these angels had received their trumpets, they must stand still, and all must be in silence, not one of them must be allowed to sound, until the prayers of the saints are attended to. The angel of the covenant, as a glorious High Priest, comes and stands at the altar, with much incense, to offer with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar, before the throne; and the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascends up with acceptance before God, out of the angel's hand: and then the angels prepare themselves to sound. And God, in the events of every trumpet, remembers those prayers: as appears at last, by the great and glorious things he accomplishes for his church, in the issue of all, in answer to these prayers, in the event of the last trumpet, which brings on the glory of the latter days, when these prayers shall be turned into joyful praises. Rev. xi. 15, 16, 17, "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces and worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come, because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned." Since it is thus, that it is the pleasure of God so to honor his people, as to carry on all the designs of his kingdom in this way, viz., by the prayers of his saints, this gives us great reason to think, that whenever the time comes that God gives an extraordinary spirit of prayer for the promised advancement of his kingdom on earth (which is God's great aim in all preceding providences, and which is the main thing that the spirit of prayer in the saints aims at), then the fulfilling this event is nigh.

God, in wonderful grace, is pleased to represent himself as it were at the

command of his people, with regard to mercies of this nature, so as to be ready to bestow them whenever they shall earnestly pray for them: Isa. xlv 11, "Thus saith the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask of me concerning things to come, concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands, command ye me." What God is speaking of in this context, is the restoration of his church; not only a restoration from temporal calamity and an outward captivity, by Cyrus; but also a spiritual restoration and advancement, by God's commanding the heavens to *drop down from above, and the skies to pour down righteousness, and causing the earth to open and bring forth salvation, and righteousness to spring up together*, ver. 8. God would have his people ask of him, or inquire of him by earnest prayer, to do this for them; and manifests himself as being at the command of earnest prayers for such a mercy: and a reason why God is so ready to hear such prayers is couched in the words, viz., because it is prayer for his own church, his chosen and beloved people, his sons and daughters, and the work of his hands; and he cannot deny any thing that is asked for their comfort and prosperity.

God speaks of himself as standing ready to be gracious to his church, and to appear for its restoration, and only waiting for such an opportunity to bestow this mercy, when he shall hear the cries of his people for it, that he may bestow it in answer to their prayers. Isa. xxx. 18, 19, "Therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious to thee; and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the Lord is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for him. For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem. Thou shalt weep no more; he will be very gracious unto thee, at the voice of thy cry: when he shall hear it, he will answer thee." The words imply as much as that when God once sees his people much engaged in praying for this mercy, it shall be no longer delayed. Christ desires to hear the voice of his spouse, that is in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs; in a low and obscure state, driven into secret corners: he only waits for this, in order to put an end to her state of affliction, and cause the day to break, and the shadows to flee away. If he once heard her voice in earnest prayer, he would come swiftly over the mountains of separation between him and her, *as a roe, or young hart;* Canticles ii. 14, to the end. When his church is in a low state, and oppressed by her enemies, and cries to him, he will swiftly fly to her relief, as birds fly at the cry of their young, Isa. xxxi. 5. Yea, when that glorious day comes, that I am speaking of, *before they call, he will answer them, and while they are yet speaking, he will hear;* and in answer to their prayers, he will make the *wolf and the lamb feed together*, &c., Isa. lxv. 24, 25. When the spouse prays for the effusion of the Holy Spirit, and the coming of Christ, by granting the tokens of his spiritual presence in his church, saying, Cant. iv. 16, *Awake, O north wind, and come, thou south, blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out; let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits;* there seems to be an immediate answer to her prayer, in the next words, in abundant communications of the Spirit, and bestowment of spiritual blessings; *I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse; I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk. Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.*

Scripture instances and examples of success in prayer give great encouragement to pray for this mercy. Most of the remarkable deliverances and restorations of the church of God, that we have account of in the Scripture, were in answer to prayer So was the redemption of the church of God from the Egyptian bondage, Exod. ii. 23, and iii. 7. The great restoration of the church in

the latter day, is often spoken of as resembled by this; as in Isa. lxiv. 1—4, xi. 11, 15, 16, xliii. 2, 3, 16—19, li. 10, 11, 15, lxiii. 11, 12, 13, Zech. x. 10, 11, Hos. ii. 14, 15. It was in answer to prayer, that the sun stood still over Gibeon, and the moon in the valley Aijalon, and God's people obtained that great victory over their enemies; in which wonderful miracle, God seemed to have some respect to a future more glorious event to be accomplished for the Christian church, in the day of her victory over her enemies, in the latter days; even that event foretold, Isa. lx. 20, "Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself." It was in answer to prayer, that God delivered his church from the mighty host of the Assyrians, in Hezekiah's time; which dispensation is abundantly made use of, as a type of the great things God will do for the Christian church in the latter days, in the prophecies of Isaiah. The restoration of the church of God from the Babylonish captivity, as abundantly appears both by Scripture prophecies and histories, was in answer to extraordinary prayer: see Jer. xxix. 10—14, and l. 4, 5, Dan. ix. throughout, Ezra, viii. 21, &c., Neh. i. 4, to the end, iv. 4, 5, and chap. ix. throughout. This restoration of the Jewish church, after the destruction of Babylon, is evidently a type of the glorious restoration of the Christian church, after the destruction of the kingdom of Antichrist; which (as all know) is abundantly spoken of in the Revelation of St. John, as the antitype of Babylon. Samson, out of weakness, received strength to pull down Dagon's temple, through prayer. So the people of God, in the latter days, will out of weakness be made strong, and will become the instruments of pulling down the kingdom of Satan, by prayer.

The Spirit of God was poured out upon Christ himself, in answer to prayer: Luke iii. 21, 22, "Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove, upon him; and a voice came from heaven which said, Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased." The Spirit descends on the church of Christ, the same way in this respect, that it descended on the Head of the church. The greatest effusion of the Spirit that ever yet has been, even that which was in the primitive times of the Christian church, which began in Jerusalem on the day of pentecost, was in answer to extraordinary prayer. When the disciples were gathered together to their Lord, a little before his ascension, *he commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which* (saith he) *ye have heard of me*," i. e., the promise of the Holy Ghost, Acts i. 4. What they had their hearts upon was the restoration of the kingdom to Israel: *Lord* (say they), *wilt thou, at this time, restore again the kingdom to Israel?* ver. 6. And according to Christ's direction after his ascension, they returned to Jerusalem, and continued in united fervent prayer and supplication. It seems they spent their time in it from day to day, without ceasing; until the Spirit came down in a wonderful manner upon them, and that work was begun which never ceased, until the world was turned upside down, and all the chief nations of it were converted to Christianity. And that glorious deliverance and advancement of the Christian church, that was in the days of Constantine the Great, followed the extraordinary cries of the church to God, as the matter is represented in Rev. vi., at the opening of the fifth seal. The church in her suffering state is represented crying with a loud voice, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge, and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" And the opening of the next seal brings on that mighty revolution, in the days of Constantine, compared to those great changes that shall be at the end of the world.

As there is so great and manifold reason from the word of God, to think that if a spirit of earnest prayer for that great effusion of the Spirit of God which I am speaking of, prevailed in the Christian church, the mercy would be soon granted; so those that are engaged in such prayer might expect the first benefit. God will come to those that are seeking him and waiting for him, Isa. xxv. 9, and xxvi. 8. When Christ came in the flesh, he was first revealed to them who were "waiting for the consolation of Israel, and looking for redemption in Jerusalem," Luke i. 25, 38. And in that great outpouring of the Spirit that was, in the days of the apostles, attended with such glorious effects among Jews and Gentiles, the Spirit came down first on those that were engaged in united, earnest prayer for it. A special blessing is promised to them that love and pray for the prosperity of the church of God, Psal. cxxii. 6: "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem. They shall prosper that love thee."

7. We are presented with many motives in the dispensation of divine Providence, at this day, to excite us to be much in prayer for this mercy.

There is much in Providence to show us our need of it, and put us on desiring it. The great outward calamities, in which the world is involved; and particularly the bloody war that embroils and wastes the nations of Christendom, and in which our nation has so great a share, may well make all that believe God's word, and love mankind, earnestly long and pray for that day, when the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the nations shall beat their swords into ploughshares, &c. But especially do the spiritual calamities and miseries of the present time, show our great need of that blessed effusion of God's Spirit: there having been, for so long a time, so great a withholding of the Spirit, from the greater part of the Christian world, and such dismal consequences of it, in the great decay of vital piety, and the exceeding prevalence of infidelity, heresy, and all manner of vice and wickedness; and especially in our land and nation; of which a most affecting account has lately been published in a pamphlet printed in London, and reprinted in Scotland, entitled "Britain's Remembrancer;" by which it seems that luxury, and wickedness of almost every kind, is well nigh come to the utmost extremity in the nation; and if vice should continue to prevail and increase for one generation more, as it has the generation past, it looks as though the nation could hardly continue in being, but must sink under the weight of its own corruption and wickedness. And the state of things in the other parts of the British dominions, besides England, is very deplorable. The church of Scotland has very much lost her glory, greatly departing from her ancient purity, and excellent order; and has of late been bleeding with great and manifold wounds, occasioned by their divisions and hot contentions. And there are frequent complaints from thence, by those that lament the corruptions of that land, of sin and wickedness, of innumerable kinds, abounding and prevailing of late, among all ranks and sorts of men there. And how lamentable is the moral and religious state of these American colonies; of New England in particular! How much is that kind of religion that was professed and much experienced and practised, in the first, and apparently the best times of New England, grown and growing out of credit! What fierce and violent contentions have been of late among ministers and people, about things of a religious nature! How much is the gospel ministry grown into contempt! And the work of the ministry, in many respects, laid under uncommon difficulties, and even in danger of sinking amongst us! How many of our congregations and churches rending in pieces! Church discipline weakened, and ordinances less and less regarded! What wild and extravagant notions, gross delusions of the devil, and strange practices have prevailed, and do still

prevail, in many places, under a pretext of extraordinary purity, spirituality, liberty and zeal against formality, usurpation, and conformity to the world! How strong and deeply rooted and general are the prejudices that prevail against vital religion and the power of godliness, and almost every thing that appertains to it, or tends to it! How apparently are the hearts of people, everywhere, uncommonly shut up against all means and endeavors to awaken sinners and revive religion! Vice and immorality, of all kinds, withal increasing and unusually prevailing! May not an attentive view and consideration of such a state of things well influence the people that favor the dust of Zion, to earnestness in their cries to God for a general outpouring of his Spirit, which only can be an effectual remedy for these evils?

Besides the things that have been mentioned, the fresh attempts made by the antichristian powers against the Protestant interest, in their late endeavors to restore a Popish government in Great Britain, the chief bulwark of the Protestant cause; as also the persecution lately revived against the Protestants in France, may well give occasion to the people of God, to renewed and extraordinary earnestness in their prayers to him, for the fulfilment of the promised downfall of Antichrist, and that liberty and glory of his church that shall follow.

As there is much in the present state of things to show us our great need of his mercy, and to cause us to desire it; so there is very much to convince us that God alone can bestow it, and show us our entire and absolute dependence on him for it. The insufficiency of human abilities to bring to pass any such happy change in the world as is foretold, or to afford any remedy to mankind, from such miseries as have been mentioned, does now remarkably appear. Those observations of the apostle, 1 Cor. i., "The world by wisdom knows not God, and God makes foolish the wisdom of this world," never were verified to such a degree as they are now. Great discoveries have been made in the arts and sciences, and never was human learning carried to such a height, as in the present age; and yet never did the cause of religion and virtue run so low in nations professing the true religion. Never was an age wherein so many learned and elaborate treatises have been written, in proof of the truth and divinity of the Christian religion; yet never were there so many infidels, among those that were brought up under the light of the gospel. It is an age, as is supposed, of great light, freedom of thought, and discovery of truth in matters of religion, and detection of the weakness and bigotry of our ancestors, and of the folly and absurdity of the notions of those that were accounted eminent divines in former generations; which notions, it is imagined, did destroy the very foundations of virtue and religion, and enervate all precepts of morality, and in effect annul all difference between virtue and vice; and yet vice and wickedness did never so prevail, like an overflowing deluge. It is an age wherein those mean and stingy principles (as they are called) of our forefathers, which (as is supposed) deformed religion, and led to unworthy thoughts of God, are very much discarded, and grown out of credit, and supposed more free, noble and generous thoughts of the nature of religion, and of the Christian scheme, are entertained, but yet never was an age, wherein religion in general was so much despised and trampled on, and Jesus Christ and God Almighty so blasphemed and treated with open, daring contempt.

The exceeding weakness of mankind, and their insufficiency in themselves for the bringing to pass any thing great and good in the world, with regard to its moral and spiritual state, remarkably appears in many things that have attended and followed the extraordinary religious commotion, that has lately

been in many parts of Great Britain and America. The infirmity of the human nature has been manifested, in a very affecting manner in the various passions that men have been the subjects of, and innumerable ways that they have been moved, as a reed shaken with the wind, on occasion of the changes and incidents, both public and private, of such a state of things. How many errors and extremes are we liable to! How quickly overtopped, blinded, misled, and confounded! And how easily does Satan make fools of men, if confident in their own wisdom and strength, and left to themselves! Many, in the late wonderful season, were ready to admire and trust in men, as if all depended on such and such instruments, at least did ascribe too much to their skill and zeal, because God was pleased to improve them a little while to do extraordinary things: but what great things do the skill and zeal of instruments do now, when the Spirit of God is withdrawn?

As the present state of things may well excite earnest desires after the promised general revival and advancement of true religion, and serve to show our dependence on God for it, so there are many things in Providence, of late, that tend to encourage us in prayer for such a mercy. That infidelity, heresy and vice do so prevail, and that corruption and wickedness are risen to such an extreme height, is that which is exceeding deplorable; but yet, I think, considering God's promises to his church, and the ordinary method of his dispensations, hope may justly be gathered from it, that the present state of things will not last long, but that a happy change is nigh. We know that God never will desert the cause of truth and holiness, nor suffer the gates of hell to prevail against his church; and that it has usually been so from the beginning of the world, that the state of the church has appeared most dark, just before some remarkable deliverance and advancement: *many a time, may Israel say, had not the Lord been on our side, then our enemies would have swallowed us up quick—the waters had overwhelmed us.* The church's extremity has often been God's opportunity for the magnifying his power, mercy and faithfulness towards her. The interest of vital piety has long been in general decaying, and error and wickedness prevailing: it looks as though the disease were now come to a crisis, and that things cannot remain long in such a state, but that a change may be expected in one respect or other. And not only God's manner of dealing with his church in former ages, and many things in the promises and prophecies of his word, but also several things appertaining to present and late aspects of divine Providence, seem to give reason to hope that the change will be such, as to magnify God's free grace and sovereign mercy, and not his revenging justice and wrath. There are certain times, that are days of vengeance, appointed for the more special displays of God's justice and indignation; and God has also his days of mercy, accepted times, chosen seasons, wherein it is his pleasure to show mercy, and nothing shall hinder it; they are times appointed for the magnifying of the Redeemer and his merits, and the triumphs of his grace, wherein his grace shall triumph over men's unworthiness in its greatest height. And if we consider God's late dealings with our nation and this land, it appears to me that there is much to make us think that this day is such a day: particularly God's preserving and delivering the nation, when in so great danger of ruin by the late rebellion; and his preserving New England, and the other British colonies in America, in so remarkable a manner, from the great armament from France, prepared and sent against us the last year; and the almost miraculous success given to us against our enemies at Cape Breton the year before, disappointing their renewed preparations and fresh attempt against these colonies, this present year, 1747, by delivering up the strength of their fleet into

the hands of the English, as they were in their way hither. And also in protecting us from time to time from armies by land that have come against us from Canada, since the beginning of the present war with France. Besides many strange instances of protection of particular forts and settlements, showing a manifest interposition of the hand of heaven, to the observation of some of our enemies, and even of the savages. And added to these, the late unexpected restoring of the greater part of our many captives in Canada, by those that held them prisoners there. It appears to me that God has gone much out of his usual way, in his exercises of mercy, patience and long-suffering in these instances. God's patience was very wonderful of old, towards the ten tribes, and the people of Judah and Jerusalem, and afterwards to the Jews in Christ's and the apostles' times; but it seems to me, all things considered, not equal to his patience and mercy to us. God does not only forbear to destroy us, notwithstanding all our provocations and their aggravations, which it would be endless to recount; but he has in the forementioned instances, wrought great things for us, wherein his hand has been most visible, and his arm made bare; especially those two instances in America, God's succeeding us against Cape Breton, and confounding the armada from France the last year; dispensations of Providence which, if considered in all their circumstances, were so wonderful, and apparently manifesting an extraordinary divine interposition, that they come, perhaps, the nearest to a parallel with God's wonderful works of old, in Moses', Joshua's, and Hezekiah's time, of any that have been in these latter ages of the world. And it is to my present purpose to observe, that God was pleased to do great things for us in both these instances, in answer to extraordinary prayer. Such remarkable appearances of a spirit of prayer, on any particular public occasion, have not been in the land, at any time within my observation and memory, as on occasion of the affair of Cape Breton. And it is worthy to be noted and remembered, that God sent that great storm on the fleet of our enemies the last year, that finally dispersed, and utterly confounded them, and caused them wholly to give over their designs against us, the very night after our day of public fasting and prayer, for our protection and their confusion.

Thus, although it be a day of great apostasy and provocation, yet it is apparently a day of the wonderful works of God; wonders of power and mercy; which may well lead us to think on those two places of Scripture, Psal. cxix. 126, "It is time for thee, Lord, to work, for they have made void thy law." And Psal. lxxv. 1, "That thy name is near, thy wondrous works declare." God appears as it were loth to destroy us, or deal with us according to our iniquities, as great and aggravated as they are; and shows that mercy pleases him. As corrupt a time as it is, it is plain by experience, that it is a time wherein God may be found, and stands ready to show mercy in answer to prayer. He that has done such great things, and has so wonderfully and speedily answered prayer for temporal mercies, will much more give the Holy Spirit if we ask him. He marvellously preserves us, and waits to be gracious to us, as though he chose to make us monuments of his grace, and not his vengeance, and waits only to have us open our mouths wide, that he may fill them.

The late remarkable religious awakenings, that have been in many parts of the Christian world, are another thing that may justly encourage us in prayer for the promised glorious and universal outpouring of the Spirit of God. "In or about the year 1732 or 1733, God was pleased to pour out his Spirit on the people of Saltzburg in Germany, who were living under Popish darkness, in a most uncommon manner: so that above twenty thousand of them, merely by reading the Bible, which they made a shift to get in their own lan-

guage, were determined to throw off Popery, and embrace the reformed religion; yea, and to become so very zealous for the truth and gospel of Jesus Christ, as to be willing to suffer the loss of all things in the world, and actually to forsake their houses, lands, goods and relations, that they might enjoy the pure preaching of the gospel; with great earnestness, and tears in their eyes, beseeching Protestant ministers to preach to them, in places where they (when banished from their own country) came, in different places." In the years 1734 and 1735, there appeared a very great and general awakening, in the county of Hampshire, in the province of the Massachusetts Bay in New England, and also in many parts of Connecticut. Since this there has been a far more extensive awakening of many thousands in England, Wales and Scotland, and almost all the British provinces in North America. There has also been something remarkable of the same kind, in some places in the United Netherlands: and about two years ago, a very great awakening and reformation of many of the Indians, in the Jerseys, and Pennsylvania, even among such as never embraced Christianity before: and within these two years, a great awakening in Virginia and Maryland. Notwithstanding the great diversity of opinions about the issue of some of these awakenings, yet I know of none that have denied that there have been great awakenings of late, in these times and places, and that multitudes have been brought to more than common concern for their salvation, and for a time were made more than ordinarily afraid of sin, and brought to reform their former vicious courses, and take much pains for their salvation. If I should be of the opinion of those that think these awakenings and strivings of God's Spirit have been generally not well improved, and so, as to most, have not issued well, but have ended in enthusiasm and delusion, yet, that the Spirit of God has been of late so wonderfully awakening and striving with such multitudes, in so many different parts of the world, and even to this day, in one place or other, continues to awaken men, is what I should take great encouragement from, that God was about to do something more glorious, and would, before he finishes, bring things to a greater ripeness, and not finally suffer this work of his to be frustrated and rendered abortive by Satan's crafty management; and that these unusual commotions are the forerunners of something exceeding glorious approaching; as the wind, earthquake and fire, at Mount Sinai, were forerunners of that voice, wherein God was, in a more eminent manner; although they also were caused by a divine power, as it is represented that these things were caused by the Lord passing by, 1 Kings xix. 11, 12.

8. How condecent, how beautiful, and of good tendency would it be, for multitudes of Christians, in various parts of the world, by explicit agreement, to unite in such prayer as is proposed to us.

Union is one of the most amiable things, that pertains to human society; yea, it is one of the most beautiful and happy things on earth, which indeed makes earth most like heaven. God has made of one blood all nations of men, to dwell on all the face of the earth; hereby teaching us this moral lesson, that it becomes mankind all to be united as one family. And this is agreeable to the nature that God has given men, disposing them to society; and the circumstances God has placed them in, so many ways obliging and necessitating them to it. A civil union, or a harmonious agreement among men in the management of their secular concerns, is amiable; but much more a pious union and sweet agreement in the great business for which man was created, and had powers given him beyond the brutes; even the business of religion; the life and soul of which is love. Union is spoken of in Scripture as the pe-

culiar beauty of the church of Christ, Cant. vi. 9: "My dove, my undefiled is but one, she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her; the daughters saw her and blessed her, yea, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her." Psal. cxxii. 3, "Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together." Eph. iv. 3—6, "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit; even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." Ver. 16, "The whole body fitly framed together and compacted, by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying itself in love."

As it is the glory of the church of Christ, that she in all her members, however dispersed, is thus one holy society, one city, one family, one body; so it is very desirable, that this union should be manifested, and become visible; and so, that her distant members should act as one, in those things that concern the common interest of the whole body, and in those duties and exercises wherein they have to do with their common Lord and head, as seeking of him the common prosperity. It becomes all the members of a particular family, who are so strictly united, and have in so many respects one common interest, to unite in prayer to God for the things they need: it becomes a nation, in days of prayer, appointed by national authority, at certain seasons, visibly to unite in prayer for those public mercies that concern the interest of the whole nation: so it becomes the church of Christ, which is one holy nation, a peculiar people, one heavenly family, more strictly united, in many respects, and having infinitely greater interests that are common to the whole, than any other society; I say, it especially becomes this society, visibly to unite, and expressly to agree together in prayer to God for the common prosperity; and above all, that common prosperity and advancement that is so unspeakably great and glorious, which God hath so abundantly promised to fulfil in the latter days.

It is becoming of Christians, with whose character a narrow selfish spirit, above all others, disagrees, to be much in prayer for that public mercy, wherein consists the welfare and happiness of the whole body of Christ, of which they are members, and the greatest good of mankind. And union or agreement in prayer is especially becoming, when Christians pray for that mercy, which above all other things concerns them unitedly, and tends to the relief, prosperity and glory of the whole body, as well as of each individual member.

Such a union in prayer for the general outpouring of the Spirit of God, would not only be beautiful, but profitable too. It would tend very much to promote union and charity between distant members of the church of Christ, and a public spirit, and love to the church of God, and concern for the interest of Zion; as well as be an amiable exercise and manifestation of such a spirit. Union in religious duties, especially in the duty of prayer, in praying one with and for another, and jointly for their common welfare, above almost all other things, tends to promote mutual affection and endearment. And if ministers and people should by particular agreement and joint resolution, set themselves, in a solemn and extraordinary manner, from time to time, to pray for the revival of religion in the world, it would naturally tend more to awaken in them a concern about things of this nature, and more of a desire after such a mercy; it would engage them to more attention to such an affair, make them more inquisitive about it, more ready to use endeavors to promote that which they, with so many others, spend so much time in praying for, and more ready to re-

joice and praise God when they see or hear of any thing of that nature or tendency: and in a particular manner, would it naturally tend to engage ministers (the business of whose lives it is to seek the welfare of the church of Christ, and the advancement of his kingdom) to greater diligence and earnestness in their work: and it would have a tendency to the spiritual profit and advantage of each particular person. For persons to be thus engaged in extraordinarily praying for the reviving and flourishing of religion in the world, will naturally lead each one to reflect on himself, and consider how religion flourishes in his own heart, and how far his example contributes to the thing that he is praying for.

9. There is great and particular encouragement given in the word of God, to express union and agreement in prayer. Daniel, when he had a great thing to request of God, viz., that God by his Holy Spirit would miraculously reveal to him a great secret, which none of the wise men, astrologers, magicians or soothsayers of Babylon could find out, he goes to Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, his companions, and they agree together, that they will unitedly desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; and their joint request was soon granted; and God put great honor upon them, above all the wise men of Babylon, to the filling their mouths with praise, and to the admiration and astonishment of Nebuchadnezzar; insomuch that that great and haughty monarch, as we are told, fell upon his face and worshipped Daniel, and owned that *his God was, of a truth, a God of gods*, and greatly promoted Daniel and his praying companions in the province of Babylon. Esther, when she had a yet more important request to make, for the saving of the church of God, and whole nation of the Jews, dispersed through the empire of Persia, when on the brink of ruin, sends to all the Jews in the city Shushan to pray and fast with her and her maidens; and their united prayers prevail; so that the event was wonderful: instead of the intended destruction of the Jews, the Jews' enemies are destroyed everywhere, and they are defended, honored and promoted, and their sorrow and distress is turned into great gladness, feasting, triumph and mutual joyful congratulations.

The encouragement to explicit agreement in prayer is great from such instances as these; but it is yet greater from those wonderful words of our blessed Redeemer, Matt. xviii. 19, "I say unto you, that if any two of you shall agree on earth, touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven." Christ is pleased to give this great encouragement to the union of his followers in this excellent and holy exercise of seeking and serving God; a holy union and communion of his people being that which he greatly desires and delights in, that which he came into the world to bring to pass, that which he especially prayed for with his dying breath, John xvii., that which he died for, and which was one chief end of the whole affair of our redemption by him: Eph. i., "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace, wherein he hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him."

PART III.

Objections Answered.

I COME now, as was proposed, in the third place, to answer objections, that some may be ready to make against the thing that has been proposed to us.

OBJECT. I. Some may be ready to say: that for Christians, in such a manner to set apart certain seasons, every week, and every quarter, to be religiously observed and kept for the purposes proposed, from year to year, would be in effect to establish certain periodical times of human invention and appointment, to be kept holy to God; and so to do the very thing, that has ever been objected against, by a very great part of the most eminent Christians and Divines among Protestants, as what men have no right to do; it being for them to add to God's institutions, and introduce their own inventions and establishments into the stated worship of God, and lay unwarrantable bonds on men's consciences, and do what naturally tends to superstition.

ANSWER. To this I would say: there can be no justice in such an objection against this proposal, as made to us in the forementioned memorial. And indeed that caution and prudence appears in the projection itself, and in the manner in which it is proposed to us, that there is not so much as any color for the objection. The proposal is such, and so well guarded, that there seems to be no room for the weakest Christian that well observes it, so to mistake it, as to understand those things to be implied in it, that have indeed been objected against by many eminent Christians and Divines among Protestants, as entangling men's consciences, and adding to divine institutions, &c. Here is no pretence of establishing any thing by authority; no appearance of any claim of power in the proposers, or right to any regard to be paid to their determinations or proposals by virtue of any deference due to them, in any respect, any more than to every individual person of those that they apply themselves to. So far from that, that they expressly mention that which they have thought of, as what they would propose to the thoughts of others, for their amendments and improvements, declaring that they chose rather to receive and spread the directions and proposals of others, than to be the first authors of any. No times, not sanctified by God's own institution, are proposed to be observed more than others, under any notion of such times being, in any respect, more holy, or more honorable, or worthy of any preference, or distinguishing regard; either as being sanctified, or made honorable, by authority, or by any great events of divine Providence, or any relation to any holy persons or things; but only as circumstantially convenient, helpful to memory, especially free from worldly business, near to the times of the administration of public ordinances, &c. None attempts to lay any bonds on others, with respect to this matter; or to desire that they should lay any bonds on themselves; or look on themselves as under any obligations either by power or promise; or so much as come into any absolute determination in their own minds, to set apart any stated days from secular affairs; or even to fix on any part of such days, without liberty to other circumstances, as shall be found expedient; and also liberty left to a future alteration of judgment, as to expediency, on further trial and consideration. All that is proposed is, that such as fall in with what is proposed in their judgments and inclinations, while they do so, should strengthen, assist and encourage their brethren that are of the same mind, by visibly consenting and joining with them in the

affair. Is here any thing like making laws in matters of conscience and religion, or adding men's institutions to God's; or any show of imposition, or superstitious esteeming and preferring one day above another, or any possible ground of entanglement of any one's conscience?

For men to go about by law to establish and limit circumstances of worship, not established or limited by any law of God, such as precise time, place and order, may be in many respects of dangerous tendency. But surely it cannot be unlawful or improper, for Christians to come into some agreement, with regard to these circumstances: for it is impossible to carry on any social worship without it. There is no institution of Scripture requiring any people to meet together to worship God in such a spot of ground, or at such an hour of the day; but yet these must be determined by agreement; or else there will be no social worship, in any place, or any hour. So we are not determined by institution, what the precise order of the different parts of worship shall be; what shall precede and what shall follow; whether praying or singing shall be first, and what shall be next, and what shall conclude: but yet some order must be agreed on, by the congregation that unite in worship; otherwise they cannot jointly carry on divine worship, in any way or method at all. If a congregation of Christians do agree to begin their public worship with prayer, and next to sing, and then to attend on the preaching of the word, and to conclude with prayer; and do by consent carry on their worship in this order from year to year; though this order is not appointed in Scripture; none will call this superstition. And if a great number of congregations, through a whole land, or more lands than one, do by common consent, keep the same method of public worship; none will pretend to find fault with it. But yet for any to go about to bind all to such a method, would be usurpation and imposition. And if such a precise order should be regarded as sacred, as though no other could be acceptable to God, this would be superstition. If a particular number of Christians shall agree, that besides the stated public worship of the Sabbath, they will, when their circumstances allow, meet together, to carry on some religious exercises, on a Sabbath day night, for their mutual edification; or if several societies agree to meet together in different places at that time; this is no superstition; though there be no institution for it. If people in different congregations, voluntarily agree to take turns to meet together in the house of God, to worship him and hear a public lecture, once a month, or once in six weeks; it is not unlawful; though there be no institution for it: but yet to do this as a thing sacred, indispensable, and binding on men's consciences, would be superstition. If Christians of several neighboring congregations, instead of a lecture, agree on some special occasion to keep a circular fast, each congregation taking its turn in a certain time and order, fixed on by consent; or if instead of keeping fast by turns, on different days, one on one week, and one on an other, they should all agree to keep a fast on the same day, and to do this either once or frequently, according as they shall judge their own circumstances, or the dispensations of divine Providence, or the importance of the mercy they seek, do require; neither is there any more superstition in this than the other.

Object. II. Some may be ready to say, there seems to be something whimsical in its being insisted on that God's people in different places should put up their prayers for this mercy at the same time; as though their prayers would be more forcible on that account; and as if God would not be so likely to hear prayers offered up by many, though they happened not to pray at the same time, as he would if he heard them all at the same moment.

Ans. To this I would say, if such an objection be made, it must be through misunderstanding. It is not signified or implied in any thing said in the proposal, or in any arguments made use of to enforce it that I have seen, that the prayers of a great number in different places will be more forcible, merely because of that circumstance of their being put up at the same time. It is indeed supposed, that it will be very expedient, that certain times for united prayer should be agreed on: which it may be, without supposing the thing supposed in the objection, on the following accounts.

1. This seems to be a proper expedient for the promoting and maintaining a union among Christians of distant places, in *extraordinary prayer* for such a mercy. It appears, from what was before observed, that there ought to be extraordinary prayers among Christians for this mercy; and that it is fit, that God's people should agree and unite in it. Though there be no reason to suppose tha prayer will be more prevalent, merely from that circumstance, that different persons pray exactly at the *same time;* yet there will be more reason to hope that prayers for such mercy will be prevalent, when God's people are very much in prayer for it, and when many of them are united in it. And therefore if agreeing on certain times for united and extraordinary prayer, be a likely means to promote a union of many in extraordinary prayer, then there is more reason to hope, that there will be prevalent prayer for such a mercy, for certain times for extraordinary prayer being agreed on. But that agreeing on certain times for united, extraordinary prayer, is a likely and proper means to promote and maintain such prayer, I think will be easily evident to any one that considers the matter. If there should be only a loose agreement or consent to it as a duty, or a thing fit and proper, that Christians should be much in prayer for the revival of religion, and much more in it than they used to be, without agreeing on particular times, how liable would such a lax agreement be to be soon forgotten, and that extraordinary prayerfulness, which is fixed to no certain times, to be totally neglected? To be sure, distant parts of the church of Christ could have no confidence in one another, that this would not be the case. If these ministers in Scotland, instead of the proposal they have made, or any other ministers or Christians in any part of the Christian world, had sent abroad only a general proposal, that God's people should, for time to come, be much more in prayer for the advancement of Christ's kingdom, than had been common among Christians heretofore; and they should hear their proposal was generally allowed to be good; and that ministers and people, in one place and another, that had occasion to speak their minds upon it, owned that it was a very proper thing, that Christians should pray more for this mercy than they generally used to do; could they from this only, have in any measure the like grounds of dependence, that God's people in various parts of the Christian world, would indeed henceforward act unitedly, in maintaining extraordinary prayer for this mercy, as if they should not only hear that the duty in general was approved of, but also that particular times were actually fixed on for the purpose, and an agreement and joint resolution was come into, that they would, unless extraordinarily hindered, set apart such particular seasons to be spent in this duty, from time to time, maintaining this practice for a certain number of years?

2. For God's people in distant places to agree on certain times for extraordinary prayer, wherein they will unitedly put up their requests to God, is a means fit and proper to be used, in order to the *visibility* of their union in such prayer. Union among God's people in prayer is truly beautiful, as has been before observed and shown; it is beautiful in the eyes of Christ, and it is justly beautiful and amiable in the eyes of Christians. And if so, then it must needs

be desirable to Christians that such union should be visible. If it would be a lovely sight in the eyes of the church of Christ, and much to their comfort, to behold various and different parts of the church united in extraordinary prayer for the general outpouring of the Spirit, then it must be desirable to them that such a union should be visible, that they may behold it; for if it be not visible, it cannot be beheld. But agreement and union in a multitude in their worship becomes visible, by an agreement in some external visible circumstances. Worship itself becomes visible worship, by something external and visible belonging to the worship, and no other way: therefore union and agreement of many in worship becomes visible no other way, but by union and agreement in the external and visible acts and circumstances of the worship. Such union and agreement becomes visible, particularly by an agreement in those two visible circumstances, *time* and *place*. When a number of Christians live near together, and their number and situation is convenient, and they have a desire visibly to unite in any acts of worship, they are wont to make their union and agreement visible by a union in both these circumstances. But when a much greater number of Christians, dwelling in distant places, so that they cannot unite by worshipping in the same place, and yet desire a visible union in some extraordinary worship; they are wont to make their union and agreement visible, by agreeing only in the former of those circumstances, viz., that of time; as is common in the appointment of public fasts and thanksgivings; the same day is appointed, for the performance of that extraordinary worship, by all those Christians, in different places, that it is intended should be united therein, as a visible note of their union. This the common light and sense of God's people leads Christians to, in all countries. And the wisdom of God seems to dictate the same thing, in appointing that his people, through the world, in all ages, in their stated and ordinary public worship, every week, should manifest this union and communion one with another, in their worship, as one holy society, and great congregation of worshippers, and servants of God; by offering up their worship on the same day; for the greater glory of their common Lord, and the greater edification and comfort of the whole body.

If any yet find fault with the proposal of certain times to be agreed on by God's people in different places, in the manner set forth in the memorial, I would ask whether they object against any such thing, as a visible agreement of God's people, in different parts of the world, in extraordinary prayer, for the coming of Christ's kingdom? Whether such a thing being visible would not be much for the public honor of God's name? And whether it would not tend to Christians' assistance, quickening and encouragement in the duty united in, by mutual example, and also to their mutual comfort, by a manifestation of that union which is amiable to Christ and Christians, and to promote a Christian union among professing Christians in general? And whether we have not reason to think, from the word of God, that before that great revival of religion foretold, is accomplished, there will be a visible union of the people of God, in various parts of the world, in extraordinary prayer, for this mercy? If these things are allowed, I would then ask further, whether any method can be thought of or devised, whereby an express agreement, and visible union of God's people, in different parts of the world, can be come into, and maintained, but this, or some other equivalent to it? If there be an express agreement about any extraordinary prayer at all, it must first be proposed by some, and others must fall in, in the manner as is represented in my text. And if extraordinary prayer be agreed on and maintained by many in different places, visibly one with another, then it must be agreed in some respect, and with regard to some

circumstances, what extraordinary prayer shall be kept up; and it must be seen and heard of, from one to another, what extraordinary prayer is kept up. But how shall this be, when no times are agreed upon, and it is never known nor heard, by those in different parts, nor is in any respect visible to them, when or how often, those in one town or country, and another, do attend this extraordinary prayer? And the consequence must necessarily be, that it can never be known how far, or in what respect others join with them in extraordinary prayer, or whether they do it at all; and not so much as one circumstance of extraordinary prayer will be visible; and indeed nothing will be visible about it. So that I think that any body that well considers the matter, will see that he that determines to oppose such a method as is proposed to us in the memorial, and all others equivalent to it, is in effect determined to oppose there ever being any such thing at all, as an agreed and visibly united, extraordinary prayer, in the church of God, for a general outpouring of the Spirit.

3. Though it would not be reasonable to suppose, that merely such a circumstance of prayer, as many people's praying at the same time, will directly have any influence or prevalence with *God*, to cause him to be the more ready to hear prayer; yet such a circumstance may reasonably be supposed to have influence on the minds of *men*; as the consideration of it may tend to encourage and assist those in praying, that are united in prayer. Will any deny, that it has any reasonable tendency to encourage, animate, or in any respect to help the mind of a Christian in serving God in any duty of religion, to join with a Christian congregation, and to see an assembly of his dear brethren around him at the same time engaged with him in the same duty? And supposing one in this assembly of saints is blind, and sees no one there; but has by other means ground of satisfaction that there is present at that time a multitude of God's people, that are united with him in the same service; will any deny, that his supposing this and being satisfied of it, can have any reasonable influence upon his mind, to excite and encourage him or in any respect to assist him, in his worship? The encouragement or help that one that joins with an assembly in worshipping God, has in his worship, by others being united with him, is not merely by any thing that he immediately perceives by sight, or any other of the external senses (for union in worship is not a thing objected to the external senses), but by the notice or knowledge the mind has of that union, or the satisfaction the understanding has that others, at that time, have their minds engaged with him in the same service: which may be, when those unitedly engaged, are at a distance one from another, as well as when they are present. If one be present in a worshipping assembly, and is not blind, and sees others present, and sees their external behavior; their union and engagedness with him in worship, is what he does not see: and what he sees encourages and assists him in his worship, only as he takes it as an evidence of that union and concurrence in his worship, that is out of his sight. And persons may have evidence of this, concerning persons that are absent, that may give him as much satisfaction of their union with him, as if they were present. And therefore consideration of others being at the same time engaged with him in worship, that are absent, may as reasonably animate and encourage him in his worship, as if they were present.

There is no wisdom in finding fault with human nature, as God has made it Things that exist now, at this present time, are in themselves no more weighty or important, than like things, and of equal reality, that existed in time past, or are to exist in time to come: yet it is evident that the consideration of things being present (at least in most cases) does especially affect human nature. As for instance, if a man could be certainly informed, that his dear child at a dis-

tance, was now under some extreme suffering; or that an absent most dear friend, was at this time thinking of him, and in the exercise of great affection towards him, or in the performance of some great deed of friendship; or if a pious parent should know that now his child was in the act of some enormous wickedness; or that on the contrary, he was now in some eminent exercise of grace, and in the performance of an extraordinary deed of virtue and piety; would not those things be more affecting to the human nature, for being considered as things that are in existence, at the present time, than if considered as at some distance of time, either past or future? Hundreds of other instances might be mentioned, wherein it is no less plain, that the consideration of the present existence of things, gives them advantage to affect the minds of men. Yea, it is undoubtedly so with things in general, that take any hold at all of our affections, and towards which we are not indifferent. And if the mind of a particular child of God is disposed to be affected by the consideration of the religion of other saints, and with their union and concurrence with him in any particular duty, or act of religion, I can see no reason why the human mind should not be more moved by the object of its affection, when considered as present, as well in this case, as in any other case: Yea, I think we may on good grounds determine there is none.

Nor may we look upon it as an instance of the peculiar weakness of the human nature, that men are more affected with things that are considered as present, than those that are distant: but it seems to be a thing common to finite minds, and so to all created intelligent beings. Thus, the angels in heaven have peculiar joy, on occasion of the conversion of a sinner, when recent, beyond what they have in that which has been long past. If any, therefore, shall call it silly and whimsical in any, to value and regard such a circumstance, in things of religion, as their existing at the present time, so as to be the more affected with them for that; they must call the host of angels in heaven a parcel of silly and whimsical beings.

I remember, the Spectator (whom none will call a whimsical author), somewhere speaking of different ways of dear friends mutually expressing their affection, and maintaining a kind of intercourse, in absence one from another, mentions such an instance as this, with much approbation, viz., that two friends, that were greatly endeared one to another, when about to part, and to be for a considerable time necessarily absent, that they might have the comfort of the enjoyment of daily mutual expressions of friendship, in their absence; agreed that they would, every day, precisely at such an hour, retire from all company and business, to pray one for another. Which agreement they so valued, and so strictly observed, that when the hour came, scarce any thing would hinder them. And rather than miss the opportunity, they would suddenly break off conversation, and abruptly leave company they were engaged with. If this be a desirable way of intercourse of particular friends, is it not a desirable and amiable way of maintaining intercourse and fellowship between brethren in Christ Jesus, and the various members of the holy family of God, in different parts of the world, to come into an agreement, that they will set apart certain times, which they will spend with one accord, in extraordinary prayer to their heavenly Father, for the advancement of the kingdom and glory of their common dear Lord and Saviour, and for each other's prosperity and happiness, and the greatest good of all their fellow-creatures through the world?

Object. III. Some perhaps may object, that it looks too much like Pharisaism, when persons engage in any such extraordinary religious exercises, beyond what is appointed by express institution, for them thus designedly to make it manifest abroad in the world, and so openly to distinguish themselves from others

Ans. 1. All open engaging in extraordinary exercises of religion, not expressly enjoined by institution, is not Pharisaism, nor has ever been so reputed in the Christian church. As when a particular church or congregation of Christians agree together to keep a day of fasting and prayer, on some special occasion; or when public days of fasting and thanksgiving are kept throughout a Christian province or country: and though it be ordinarily the manner of the civil magistrate to lead in the setting apart such days; yet that alters not the case: if it be Pharisaism in the society openly to agree in such extraordinary exercises of religion, it is not less Pharisaism, for the heads of the society leading in the affair. And if that were now the case with the Christian church, that once was, for about three hundred years together, that the civil magistrate was not of the society of Christians, nor concerned himself in their affairs; yet this would not render it the less suitable for Christians, on proper occasions, jointly and visibly, one to another, to engage in such extraordinary exercises of religion, and to keep days of fasting and thanksgiving by agreement.

Ans. 2. As to the latter part of the objection, there can be no room for it in this case. It cannot be objected against what is proposed in the memorial, that if persons should comply with it, it would look like affecting singularity, and open distinction from others of God's professing people, in extraordinary religion, such as was in the Pharisees of old: because it is evident, the very design of the memorial, is not to promote singularity and distinction, but as much as possible to avoid and prevent it. The end of the memorial is not to confine and limit the thing proposed, that it may be practised only by a few, in distinction from the generality; but on the contrary to extend it, and make it as general among professing Christians as possible. Some had complied with the extraordinary duty proposed, and therein had been distinguished from others, for two years, before the memorial was published; and they were more distinguished than they desired; and therefore send abroad this memorial, that the practice might be more spread, and become more general, that they might be less distinguished. What they evidently seek, is to bring to pass as general a compliance as possible of Christians of all denominations, *entreating that the desire of concurrence and assistance, contained in the memorial, may by no means be understood, as restricting to any particular denomination or party, or those who are of such or such opinions about any former instances of remarkable religious concern; but to be extended to all, who shall vouchsafe any attention to the proposal, and have at heart the interest of vital Christianity, and the power of godliness; and who, however differing about other things, are convinced of the importance of fervent prayer, to promote that common interest, and of Scripture persuasives, to promote such prayer.*

Object. IV. Another objection, that is very likely to arise in the minds of many against such extraordinary prayer as is proposed for the speedy coming of Christ's kingdom, is that we have no reason to expect it, until there first come a time of most extreme calamity to the church of God, and prevalence of her Antichristian enemies against her; even that which is represented, Rev. xi., by the slaying of the witnesses; but have reason to determine the contrary.

Ans. It is an opinion that seems pretty much to have obtained, that before the fulfilment of the promises relating to the church's latter day glory, there must come a most terrible time, a time of extreme suffering, and dreadful persecution of the church of Christ; wherein Satan and Antichrist are to obtain their greatest victory over her, and she is to be brought lower than ever by her enemies. Which opinion has chiefly risen from the manner of interpreting and applying the forementioned prophecy of the slaying of the witnesses. This

opinion, with such persons as retain it, must needs be a great restraint and hinderance, with regard to such an affair as is proposed to us in the memorial. If persons expect no other, than that the more the glorious times of Christ's kingdom are hastened, the sooner will come this dreadful time, wherein the generality of God's people must suffer so extremely, and the church of Christ be almost extinguished, and blotted out from under heaven; how can it be otherwise, than a great damp to their hope, courage and activity, in praying for, and reaching after the speedy introduction of those glorious promised times? As long as this opinion is retained, it will undoubtedly ever have this unhappy influence on the minds of those that wish well to Zion, and favor her stones and dust. It will tend to damp, deaden, and keep down, life, hope, and joyful expectation in prayer; and even in great measure, to prevent all earnest, animated and encouraged prayer, in God's people, for this mercy, at any time before it is actually fulfilled. For they that proceed on this hypothesis in their prayers, must, at the same time that they pray for this glorious day, naturally conclude within themselves, that they shall never live to see on the earth any dawning of it, but only to see the dismal time that shall precede it, in which the far greater part of God's people, that shall live until then, shall die under the extreme cruelties of their persecutors. And the more they expect that God will answer their prayers, by speedily bringing on the promised glorious day, the more must they withal expect themselves, to have a share in those dreadful things, that nature shrinks at the thoughts of, and also expect to see things that a renewed nature shrinks at and dreads; even the prevailing of God's enemies, and the almost total extinguishing the true religion in the world. And on this hypothesis, these discouragements are like to attend the prayers of God's people, until that dismal time be actually come: and when that is come, those that had been prophesying and praying in sackcloth, shall generally be slain: and after that time is over, then the glorious day shall immediately commence. So that this notion tends to discourage and hinder all earnest prayer in the church of God for that glorious coming of Christ's kingdom, until it be actually come; and that is to hinder its ever being at all.

It being so, this opinion being of such hurtful tendency, certainly it is a thousand pities it should prevail and be retained, if truly there be no good ground for it.

Therefore in answer to this objection, I would, with all humility and modesty, examine the foundation of that opinion, of such a dreadful time of victory of Antichrist over the church, yet to be expected: and particularly shall endeavor to show that the slaying of the witnesses, foretold Rev. xi. 7—10, is not an event that remains yet to be fulfilled. To this end, I would propose the following things to consideration.

1. The time wherein the *witnesses lie dead in the streets of the great city*, doubtless signifies the time wherein the true church of Christ is lowest of all, most of all prevailed against by Antichrist, and nearest to an utter extinction; the time wherein there is left the least visibility of the church of Christ yet subsisting in the world, least remains of any thing appertaining to true religion, whence a revival of it can be expected, and wherein all means of it are most abolished, and the state of the church is in all respects furthest from any thing whence any hopes of its ever flourishing again might arise. For before this, the witnesses prophesy in sackcloth; but now they are dead: before this, they were kept low indeed, yet there was life, and power to bring plagues on their enemies, and so much of true religion left, as to be a continual eyesore and torment to them; but now their enemies rejoice and feast, and have a general

public triumph, as having obtained a full victory over them, and having entirely extirpated them, and being completely delivered from them, and all that might give them any fear of being ever troubled with them any more.—This time, wherever it be fixed, doubtless is the time, not only, wherein fewest professors of true religion are left in the world; but a time wherein the truth shall be farthest out of sight, and out of reach, and most forgotten; wherein there are left fewest beams of light or traces of truth, fewest means of information, and opportunities of coming to the knowledge of the truth; and so a time of the most barbarous ignorance, most destitute of all history, relics, monuments and memory of things appertaining to true religion, or things, the knowledge of which hath any tendency to bring truth again to light; and most destitute of learning, study an inquiry.

Now, if we consider the present state of mankind, is it credible, that a time will yet come in the world, that in these respects exceeds all times that were before the reformation? And that such a time will come before the fall of Antichrist, unless we set that at a much greater distance, than the farthest that any have yet supposed? It is next to impossible, that such a change should be brought about in so short a time: it cannot be without a miracle. In order to it, not only must the Popish nations so prevail, as utterly to extirpate the Protestant religion through the earth; but must do many other things, far more impossible for them to effect, in order to cover the world with so gross and confirmed a darkness, and to bury all light and truth in so deep an oblivion, and so far out of all means and hopes of a revival. And not only must a vast change be made in the Protestant world, but the Popish nations must be strangely metamorphosed; and they themselves must be terribly persecuted by some other power, in order to bring them to such a change: nor would persecution without extirpation be sufficient for it. If there should be another universal deluge, it might be sufficient to bring things in the world to such a pass; provided a few ignorant barbarous persons only were preserved in an ark: and it would require some catastrophe, not much short of this, to effect it.

2. In the reformation that was in the days of Luther, Calvin and others, their contemporaries, the threatened destruction of Antichrist, that dreadful enemy, that had long oppressed and worn out the saints, was begun; nor was it a small beginning, but Antichrist had fallen, at least half way to the ground, from that height of power and grandeur, that he was in before. Then began the vials of God's wrath to be *poured out on the throne of the beast*, to the great shaking of its foundations, and diminution of its extent; so that the Pope lost near half of his former dominions: and as to degree of authority and influence over what is left, he is not now possessed of what he had before. God now at length, in answer to the long continued cries of his people, awaked as one out of sleep, and began to deliver his church from her exceeding low state, that she had continued in for many ages, under the great oppression of this grand enemy, and to restore her from her exile and bondage in the spiritual Babylon and Egypt.—And it is not agreeable to the analogy of God's dispensations, that after this, God should desert his people, and hide himself from them, even more than before, and leave them more than ever in the hands of their enemy, and all this advantage of the church against Antichrist should be entirely given up and lost, and the power and tyranny of Antichrist be more confirmed, and the church brought more under, and more entirely subdued than ever before, and further from all help and means to recover. This is not God's way of dealing with his people, or with their enemies: his work of salvation is perfect: when he has begun such a work he will carry it on: when he once causes the day of deliver-

ance to dawn to his people, after such a long night of dismal darkness, he will not extinguish the light, and cause them to return again to midnight darkness; when he has begun to enkindle the blessed fire, he will not quench the smoking flax, until he hath brought forth judgment unto victory. When once the church, after her long labor and sore travail, has brought forth her man-child, and wrought some deliverance, her enemies shall never be able to destroy this child, though an infant; but it shall ascend up to heaven, and be set on high out of their reach.

The destruction that God often foretold and threatened to ancient Babylon (which is often referred to in the Revelation, as a great type of the Antichristian church) was gradually accomplished, and fulfilled by various steps, at a great distance of time one from another: it was begun in the conquest of Cyrus, and was further accomplished by Darius, about eighteen years after, by a yet greater destruction, wherein it was brought much nearer to utter desolation; but it was about two hundred and twenty-three years after this, before the ruin of it was perfected, and the prophecies against it fully accomplished, in its being made an utter and perpetual desolation, without any human inhabitant, becoming the dwelling place for owls, dragons and other doleful creatures. But yet when God had once begun to destroy her, he went on until he finished, and never suffered her any more to recover and establish her former empire. So the restitution of the Jewish church, after the Babylonish captivity, was gradual, by various steps; there were several times of return of the Jews from captivity, and several distinct decrees of the Persian emperors, for the restoring and rebuilding Jerusalem, and re-establishing the Jewish church and state; and it was done in turbulent times; there were great interruptions and checks, and violent oppositions, and times wherein the enemy did much prevail: but yet, when God had once begun the work, he also made an end; he never suffered the enemies of the Jews to bring Jerusalem to such a state of desolation as it had been in before, until the promised restoration was complete. Again, the deliverance of God's church from the oppression of Antiochus Epiphanes (another known type of Antichrist) was gradual; they were first holpen with a little help, by the Maccabees; and afterwards the promised deliverance was completed, in the recovery of Jerusalem, the restoration of the temple, the miserable end of Antiochus, and the consequent more full deliverance of the whole land. But after God once began to appear for the help of his church in that instance, after it seemed dead and past all hope, he never suffered Antiochus to prevail against his people, to that degree, again; though the utmost strength of this great monarch was used, from time to time, in order to it, and his vast empire was engaged against a handful that opposed them: God never forsook the work of his own hand; when he had begun to deliver his people, he also made an end. And so Haman, that proud and inveterate enemy of the Jews, that thought to extirpate the whole nation, who also was probably another type of Antichrist, when he began to fall before Esther and Mordecai, never stayed, until his ruin and the church's deliverance were complete. Haman's wife speaks of it, as an argument of his approaching inevitable full destruction, that he had begun to fall, Esth. vi. 15.

3. If it should be so that Antichristian tyranny and darkness should hereafter so prevail against the Protestant church, and the true religion, and every thing appertaining to it, as to bring things to the pass forementioned, this would hardly so properly answer the prophecy of slaying the two witnesses; for doubtless, one reason why they are called two witnesses, is that the number of the remaining witnesses for the truth, though sufficient, was yet very small.

Which was remarkably the case, in the dark times of popery: but since the reformation, the number of those appearing on the side of true religion, has been far from being so small. The visible church of Christ has been vastly large, in comparison of what it was before: the number of Protestants has sometimes been thought nearly equal to that of the Papists; and doubtless the number of true saints has been far greater than before.

4. It seems to be signified in prophecy, that after the reformation Antichrist should never prevail against the church of Christ any more, as he had done before. I cannot but think, that whoever reads and well considers what the learned Mr. Lowman has written on the five first vials, Rev. xvi., in his late exposition on the Revelation, must think it to be very manifest, that what is said ver. 10, of the pouring out of the fifth vial *on the throne of the beast* (for so it is in the original), is a prophecy of the reformation. Then the vial of God's wrath was poured out on the throne of the beast, i. e., according to the language of Scripture, on his authority and dominion, greatly to weaken and diminish it, both in extent and degree. But when this is represented in the prophecy, then it is added, *and his kingdom was full of darkness, and they gnawed their tongues for pain.* If we consider what is commonly intended by such like phrases in the Scripture, I think we shall be naturally, and as it were necessarily led to understand those words thus: their policy, by which heretofore they have prevailed, shall now fail them; their authority shall be weakened, and their dominion greatly diminished, and all their craft and subtilty shall not avail them to maintain and support the throne of the beast, or ever again to extend his authority so far as it had been before extended, and to recover what it lost; but all their crafty devices to this end shall be attended with vexatious, tormenting disappointment; they that have the management of the affairs of the beast's kingdom, shall henceforward grope as in the dark, and stumble and be confounded in their purposes, plots and enterprises; formerly their policy was greatly successful, was as a light to guide them to their ends, but now their kingdom shall be full of darkness, and their wisdom shall fail them in all their devices to subdue, and again to bring under the church of God.

The Scripture takes notice of the great policy and subtilty of the powers that support this kingdom, Dan. vii. 8: "And behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man." So it is said of Antiochus Epiphanes, that great type of Antichrist, Dan. viii. 23, "A king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up." Verse 25, "And through his policy also, shall he cause craft to prosper in his hand." This understanding and policy is the light of this kingdom, as true wisdom is the light of the spiritual Jerusalem. And therefore when this light fails, then may the kingdom of this spiritual Egypt be said to be full of darkness. God henceforward will defend his people from these mystical Egyptians, as he defended Israel of old from Pharaoh and his host, when pursuing after them, by placing a cloud and darkness in their way, and so not suffering them to come nigh. So he will protect his church from the men of that city that is spiritually called Sodom, as Lot's house, wherein were the angels, was defended from the men of Sodom, by their being smitten with darkness or blindness, so that they wearied themselves to find the door: and as God defended the city in which was Elisha the prophet and witness of the Lord, from the Syrians, when they compassed it about with horses and chariots and a great host to apprehend him, by smiting them with blindness. The Scripture teaches us, that God is wont in this way to defend his church and people from their crafty and powerful enemies: Job v. 11, &c., "To set up on high those that be low, that those which mourn may be exalted to safety: he

disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise: he taketh the wise in their own craftiness, and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong: they meet with darkness in the daytime, and grope in the noonday as in the night: but he saveth the poor from the sword, from their mouth, and from the hand of the mighty. Psal. xxxv. 4, 6, "Let them be confounded and put to shame, that seek after my soul: let them be turned back, and brought to confusion, that devise my hurt.—Let their way be dark and slippery."

Such defence of God's Protestant church, and disappointment and confusion of all the subtle devices, deep laid schemes, and furious attempts of their Antichristian enemies, to bring them under and root them out, and their seeing them still maintaining their ground, and subsisting in an independency on them, in spite of all that they do, makes them as it were gnash their teeth, and bite their tongues for mere rage and vexation; agreeably to Psal. cxii. 9, 10, "His righteousness endureth forever, his horn shall be exalted with honor: the wicked shall see it and be grieved, and gnash with his teeth and melt away: the desire of the wicked shall perish."

Hitherto this prophecy has been very signally fulfilled; since the reformation, the kingdom of Antichrist has been remarkably filled with darkness in this respect. Innumerable have been the crafty devices, and great attempts of the church of Rome, wherein they have exerted their utmost policy and power, to recover their lost dominions, and again to subjugate the Protestant nations, and subdue the northern heresy, as they call it. They have wearied themselves in these endeavors for more than two hundred years past. But have hitherto been disappointed; and have often been strangely confounded. When their matters seemed to be brought to a ripeness, and they triumphed as though their point was gained, their joy and triumph was suddenly turned into vexation and torment. How many have been their politic and powerful attempts against the Protestant interest in our nation, in particular! And how wonderfully has God disappointed them from time to time! And as God has hitherto so remarkably fulfilled his word in defending his Protestant church from Antichrist, so I think we have ground to trust in him, that he will defend it to the end.

5. The hypothesis of those that suppose the slaying of the witnesses is a thing that yet remains to be fulfilled, makes the prophecies of the Revelation to be inconsistent one with another. According to their hypothesis, that battle Rev. xi. 7, wherein the beast makes war with the witnesses, and overcomes them, and kills them, is the last and greatest conflict between Antichrist and the church of Christ, that is to precede the utter overthrow of the Antichristian kingdom. And they must suppose so; for they suppose, that immediately after the sufferings the church shall endure in that war, she shall arise, and as it were ascend into heaven; i. e., as they interpret it, the church shall be directly advanced to her latter day rest, prosperity and glory. And consequently, this conflict must be the same with that great battle between Antichrist and the church, that is described chap. xvi. 13, to the end, and more largely chap. xix. 11, to the end. For that which is described in these places, is most evidently and indisputably the greatest and last battle or conflict that shall be between the church and her Antichristian enemies; on which the utter downfall of Antichrist, and the church's advancement to her latter day glory, shall be immediately consequent. And so the earthquake that attends the resurrection of the witnesses, chap. xi. 13, must be the same with that great earthquake that is described, chap. xvi. 18. And the falling of the tenth part of the city must be the same with that terrible and utter destruction of Antichrist's kingdom, chap. xvi. 17, to the end.

But these things cannot be. The battle chap. xi. 7, cannot be the same with

that last and great battle between the church and Antichrist described, chapters xvi. and xix. For the things that are said of one and the other, and their issue, are in no wise consistent. In that battle, chap. xi., the church of God conflicts with her enemies in sorrow, sackcloth and blood: but in the other the matter is represented exceedingly otherwise; the church goes forth to fight with Antichrist, not in sackcloth and blood, but clothed in white raiment, Christ himself before them, as their captain, going forth in great pomp and magnificence, upon a *white horse, and on his head many crowns, and on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords;* and the saints that follow so glorious a Leader to this great battle, follow him on white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, in garments of strength, joy, glory and triumph; in the same kind of raiment, that the saints appear in, when they are represented as triumphing with Christ, with palms in their hands, chap. vii. 9. And the issue of the latter of these conflicts, is quite the reverse of the former. In that battle, chap. xi. 7, "The beast makes war with the witnesses, and overcomes them and kills them." The same is foretold, Dan. vii. 21, "I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them." And Rev. xii. 7, "And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them." But in the issue of that last and great battle, which the church shall have with her Antichristian enemies, the church shall overcome them, and kill them: Rev. xvii. 14, "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them; for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings; and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful," compared with chapter xix. 16, and following verses, and chap. xvi. 16, 17. In the conflict that the beast shall have with the witnesses, the "beast kills them and their dead bodies lie unburied;" as though they were to be meat for the beasts of the earth, and fowls of heaven: but in that last great battle, it is represented that Christ and his church shall *slay their enemies, and give their dead bodies to be meat for the fowls of heaven,*" chap. xix. 17, to the end. There is no manner of appearance, in the descriptions that are given of that last great battle, of any advantages gained in it, by the enemies of the church, before they themselves are overcome; but all appearance of the contrary. Besure the descriptions in the 16th and 19th chapters of the Revelation, will by no means allow of such an advantage, as the overcoming of God's people, and slaying them, and their lying dead for some time, and unburied, that their dead bodies may be for their enemies to abuse, and trample on, and make sport with. In chap. xvi., we read of their being gathered together against the church, a mighty host, into the place called Armageddon; and then the first thing we hear of, is the pouring out of the seventh vial of God's wrath, and a voice saying, *It is done.* And so in the 19th chapter, we have an account of "the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, being gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army." And then the next thing we hear of, is, that "the beast is taken, and with him the false prophet; and that these are both cast alive into the lake of fire; and that the remnant of the vast army are slain, and all the fowls filled with their flesh. The issue of the conflict of the beast with the witnesses is the triumph of the church's enemies over God's people, looking on them as entirely vanquished, and their interest utterly ruined, past all possibility of recovery: *they that dwell on the earth shall see the dead bodies of the saints lying in the streets of the great city, and shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and send gifts one to another.* But the issue of that great and last battle is quite the reverse; it is the church's triumph over her enemies as being utterly and forever destroyed.

Here if any one shall say, that the ascension of the witnesses into heaven in the sight of their enemies, may, as has more generally been supposed, signify the church's last victory and triumph over her Antichristian enemies, and final deliverance from them, and yet the battle between Antichrist and the witnesses spoken of Rev. xi. 7, wherein the witnesses are slain, may not be the same with that last and greatest battle between Antichrist and the church, chap. xvi. and xix., that immediately precedes and issues in the church's final victory and deliverance; there may be two great battles, soon following one another, though both are not mentioned in the same place; one, a conflict wherein Antichrist prevails against the witnesses, and overcomes them, and kills them, and another, that great battle described chap. xvi. and xix., after the witnesses' resurrection, before their ascension into heaven, wherein they shall prevail and overcome their enemies, and kill them: I say if any one shall say thus, they will say that which the prophecies give no reason for, nor allow any room to suppose. That last battle between the church and Antichrist, wherein Christ and his people obtain a complete victory, is evidently one of the greatest and most remarkable events foretold in all the Apocalypse: and there is no one thing, unless it be the consummation of all things, in the two last chapters, that is described in so solemn and august a manner. And the description shows that it is an event which, with its circumstances, must take up much time. There is vast preparation made for it by the church's enemies: the devils, in order to stir men up, and gather them together, to this *battle of that great day of God Almighty, go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world*, to propagate various kinds of delusions, far and wide, all over the world; which undoubtedly must take up many years' time; chap. xvi. 13, 14. And then great preparation is made in the church of God, to make opposition; chap. xix. 11—17. Now can any reasonably suppose, that in what is represented, chap. xi., of a great conflict between Antichrist and God's people, wherein the latter are overcome and slain, and lie dead three days (or three years) and a half, and their enemies triumphing over them, but God's people rising again from the dead in the midst of this triumph of their enemies, and ascending into heaven, while their enemies stand astonished and amazed spectators—that the manner of the description leaves fair room for us to suppose, that after this resurrection of God's people, they continue long before they ascend, to encounter with Antichrist in a new conflict, wherein their enemies after long time to prepare, should engage with them with vastly greater preparation, strength, and violence than before, and should wage war with them with the mightiest army that ever was gathered against the church, and in the greatest battle that ever was fought?

And besides, the witnesses ascending into heaven in the sight of their enemies, spoken of chap. xi., cannot be the same with the church's gaining a glorious ascendant over her enemies, in her final victory over Antichrist, spoken of chap. xvi. and xix., because the descriptions of the events that attend the one and the other do by no means answer each other. For, observe, it is said that when the witnesses *arose, and stood on their feet, and ascended into heaven, the same hour there was a great earthquake:* but this does not seem to answer to what is described chap. xiv. 18, "And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings, and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great." It is said that at the time of the first earthquake, chap. xi. 13, "The tenth part of the city fell:" but how far does this fall short of what is described, as attending the great earthquake! Chap. xvi. 19, 20, "And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell; and great Babylon came into remembrance before God, to give

unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath; and every island fled away, and the mountains were not found." It is said of the earthquake, chap. xi., "And in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: but how far is this from answering the slaughter described chap. xix. 17, &c., which is represented as a general slaughter of the kings, captains, mighty men, horses, and armies of the earth, and of the whole world; so that all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, as far as the sun shines, are filled with the flesh of the dead carcases, it being the *flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great!* Compare chap. xvi. 14. Who can think, that this great slaughter that is thus represented, should in chap. xi. be only called a *slaying seven thousand men?*

If we read this very eleventh chapter through, we shall see that the falling of the tenth part of the city, and the witnesses rising and ascending into heaven, are entirely distinct from the final destruction of Antichrist, and that advancement of the church to her latter day glory, that is consequent upon it. The judgments here spoken of, as executed on God's enemies, are under another *wo;* and the benefits bestowed on the church, are under another *trumpet.* For immediately after the account of the rising and ascending of the witnesses, and the tenth part of the city's falling, and the slaying of the seven thousand men, and the affrighting of the rest, and their giving glory to the God of heaven, follow these words in the 14th and 15th verses, "The second wo is past; and behold the third wo cometh quickly. And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever." And in the following verses, we have an account of the praises sung to God on this occasion. And then in the last verse, we have a brief hint of that same earthquake, and that great hail, and those thunders, and lightnings, and voices, that we have an account of in the latter part of chap. xvi. So that the earthquake mentioned in the last verse of chap. xi. is that great earthquake that attends the last great conflict of the church and her enemies; and not that mentioned ver. 13.

The three woes are the woes of God on Antichrist and his subjects; and the third and last of them evidently signifies the terrible judgments of God on Antichrist, by which God's wrath upon him shall be fulfilled in his utter destruction: but the calamities on Antichrist spoken of as attending the rising and ascending of the witnesses, such as the falling of the tenth part of the city, and slaying seven thousand men, do not belong to this last wo, and therefore do not signify the final destruction of Antichrist: for the words of ver. 14, will by no means allow of such a supposition; for there, immediately after giving an account of these calamities, it is added, "The second wo is past; and behold the third wo cometh quickly:" making a most plain and express distinction between these calamities that had already been mentioned, and especially these that were just then mentioned in the very last words, and the calamities that belong to the third wo, that yet remain to be mentioned: for by being passed, the prophet is to be understood no otherwise than passed in the declaration and representation; it was not past in any other respect: it is as much as to say, Thus an account has been given of the calamities upon Antichrist that belong to the second wo; now I proceed to give an account of those dispensations of Providence that belong to the third and last wo, which shall prove Antichrist's final destruction, and end in the kingdoms of this world becoming the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ.

What was fulfilled in the reformation, well answers the representation made

concerning the witnesses, Rev. xi. 11, 12, of "the Spirit of Life from God entering into them, and their standing on their feet, and ascending up to heaven, in the sight of their enemies." A little before the reformation, the state of the church of God, and of true religion was lowest of all, and nearest to utter extinction. Antichrist had, after great and long struggles, prevailed against the Waldenses, Albigenses, and Bohemians. The war with the Albigenses seems especially to be intended by the war of the beast with the witnesses spoken of, ver. 7. These were witnesses to the truth, that were the most numerous and considerable, and those that most tormented the church of Rome. And the war that was maintained against them, was by far the greatest that ever Antichrist had against any of the professors of the truth, before the reformation; and was properly the war of the beast; it was the Pope that proclaimed the war, and that raised the soldiers by his emissaries and priests, preaching the cross, gathering innumerable multitudes of pilgrims from all parts of Christendom, and raising one crusade after another, which were conducted and managed by the Pope's legates; and it was the Pope that paid the soldiers with pardons, indulgences, promises of paradise, and such like trumpery. When Antichrist had gradually prevailed against these witnesses, with much difficulty, and long-continued violent struggling, and after innumerable vexatious disasters and disappointments; the church of God, in the time of Luther and other reformers, on a sudden, in a wonderful manner revives, when such an event was least expected (to the surprise and amazement of their Antichristian enemies), and appears in such strength, that the reformed are able to stand on their own legs, and to withstand all the power and rage of the church of Rome. Presently after this revival, the people of God are set on high, having the civil magistrate in many countries on their side, and henceforward have the power of many potent princes engaged for their protection: and this, in sight of their enemies, and greatly to their grief and vexation; who, though they from time to time exert their utmost, never are able to prevail against them, to bring them under any more, as they had done in former wars. Oftentimes in Scripture, God's churches dwelling in safety out of the reach of their enemies, is represented by their dwelling on high, or being set on high; as Psal. lix. 1, lxix. 29, xci. 14, cvii. 41, Prov. xxix. 25, Isa. xxxiii. 16. The children of Israel, in their deliverance out of Egypt, from their cruel taskmasters, that would fain have brought them into bondage again, were said to be carried on eagle's wings, that is lofty in its flight, flies away towards heaven; so that the Egyptians could not come at them: and they were protected by the cloud that went with them; as the witnesses are said to be caught up to heaven in a cloud. Compare this with Isa. iv. 5: "And the Lord will create upon every dwelling-place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for upon all the glory shall be a defence."

I shall not pretend to explain the mystery of the three days and half of the witnesses lying dead, or to determine the precise duration signified by that mystical representation. Possibly no particular measure of time may be intended by it; and yet it not be without significancy.* As no particular number of persons is intended by the two witnesses; but in general, it intends a small number,

* Mr. Lowman, in the preface to his Paraphrase on the Revelation, page 8, observes as follows: "Prophetic numbers do not always express a determinate duration or space of time, any more than they always express a certain number. Prophecy, I acknowledge, uses numbers sometimes as other expressions, in a figurative meaning, as symbols and hieroglyphics. Thus the number seven, sometimes does not denote the precise number seven: but figuratively denotes perfection, or a full and complete number: and the number ten, sometimes does not mean precisely ten in number, but many in general, or a considerable number."

and yet a sufficient number; and as small as might be, and yet be sufficient; as, less than two witnesses was not sufficient: so perhaps no particular duration of that low state that the church was in before the reformation, may be intended by three days and half; but in general it may be hereby signified, that this time of the triumphing of the wicked, and extremity of God's church, should be but short. And possibly three days and half may be mentioned, because that is the utmost space of time that a dead body can be ordinarily supposed to lie without putrefaction; signifying that at this time the church should be brought to the very brink of utter ruin, and yet should be preserved and revive again. And half a day may be mentioned to signify the particular care of Providence in exactly determining this time of the church's extremity. And probably there may be some reference to the three times (or three years) and a half of the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth; the more apparently to show the disproportion between the time of the church's welfare, and the time of her enemies' victory and triumph: the time of the church's affliction and conflict may be long; and in the issue she may be overcome; but the time of this victory shall be but short; in comparison with the other, but as a day to a year: she may, as it were, be killed, and lie dead, until she comes to the very brink of utter and hopeless ruin, but yet God will not suffer her to see corruption; but at that very time, when her enemies expected that she should putrefy, she shall rise; and be set on high, out of their reach, greatly to their astonishment.

The grand objection against all this, is, that it is said, that *the witnesses should prophesy* twelve hundred and sixty *days clothed in sackcloth; and when they have finished their testimony, the beast should make war against them and kill them*, &c., and that it seems manifest, that after this, they are no longer in sackcloth, for henceforward they are in an exalted state in heaven: and that therefore, seeing the time of their wearing sackcloth, is twelve hundred and sixty days, which is the time of the continuance of Antichrist; hence their being slain and rising again, must be at the conclusion of this period, and so at the end of Antichrist's reign.

In answer to which I would say, that we can justly infer no more from this prophecy than this, viz., that the twelve hundred and sixty days is the proper time of the church's trouble and bondage, or being clothed in sackcloth; because it is the appointed time of the reign of Antichrist. But this does not hinder but that God, out of his great compassion to his church, should, in some respect, shorten the days, and grant that she should, in some measure, anticipate the appointed great deliverance that should be at the end of those days. As he has in fact done in the reformation; whereby the church has had a great degree of restoration granted, from the darkness and power of Antichrist, before her proper time of restoration, which is at the end of the twelve hundred and sixty days.—Thus the church of Christ, through the tender mercies of her Father and Redeemer, in some respects, anticipates her deliverance from her sorrows and sackcloth: as many parts of the church are hereby brought from under the dominion of the Antichristian powers, into a state of power and liberty; though in other respects, the church may be said to continue in sackcloth, and in the wilderness, until the end of days; many parts of it still remaining under grievous persecution.

What we render, *when they shall have finished their testimony*, Mr. Lowman, from Mr. Daubuz, renders, *while they shall perform their testimony;* and observes, that the original may mean the time of their testimony, as well as the end of it.

I might here observe that we have other instances of God's shortening the

days of his church's captivity and bondage, either at the beginning or end, very parallel with what has been now supposed in the case of the witnesses. Thus the proper time of the bondage of the posterity of Abraham in Egypt, was four hundred years, Gen. xv. 13. But yet God in mercy deferred the beginning of their bondage; whereby the time was much shortened at the beginning. So the time wherein it was foretold that the *whole land of Israel should be a desolation and an astonishment, and the land should enjoy her Sabbaths*, by the *Babylonish captivity, was seventy years*, Jer. xxv. 11, 12, and these seventy years are dated in 2 Chron. xxxvi. 20, 21, from Zedekiah's captivity, and yet, from that captivity to Cyrus's decree, was but fifty-two years; though it was indeed seventy years before the more full restoration of the Jewish church and state by Darius's decree, Ezra. vi. So the proper time of the oppression and bondage of the Jewish church under Antiochus Epiphanes, wherein *both the sanctuary and host should be trodden under foot by him*, was *two thousand three hundred days;* Dan. viii. 13, 14. The time from Antiochus's taking Jerusalem and polluting the sanctuary, to Antiochus's death, seems to have been about so long: but God shortened the days, by granting remarkable help to his people by means of the Maccabees, before that time: yea the temple and sanctuary were restored, and the altar rebuilt and dedicated before that time.

Upon the whole, I think there appears to be no reason from the prophecy concerning the two witnesses, Rev. xi., to expect any such general and terrible destruction of the church of Christ, before the utter downfall of Antichrist, as some have supposed; but good reason to determine the contrary. It is true, there is abundant evidence in Scripture, that there is yet remaining a mighty conflict between the church and her enemies, the most violent struggle of Satan and his adherents, in opposition to true religion, and the most general commotion that ever was in the world, since the foundation of it to that time; and many particular Christians, and some parts of the church of Christ, may suffer hard things in this conflict: but in the general, Satan and Antichrist shall not get the victory, nor greatly prevail; but on the contrary be entirely conquered, and utterly overthrown, in this great battle. So that I hope this prophecy of the slaying of the witnesses, will not stand in the way of a compliance with the proposal made to us in the memorial, as a prevalent objection and discouragement.

Object. 5. A late very learned and ingenious expositor of the Revelation, viz., Mr. Lowman, sets the fall of Antichrist, and consequently the coming of Christ's kingdom at a great distance; supposing that the twelve hundred and sixty years of Antichrist's reign did not begin until the year seven hundred and fifty-six; and consequently that it will not end until after the year two thousand, more than two hundred and fifty years hence; and this opinion he confirms by a great variety of arguments.

Ans. 1. If this objection be allowed to be valid, and that which ought to determine persons in an affair of this nature, and those things concerning God's people praying for this glorious event, be also allowed to be true, which before were shown to be the will of God abundantly revealed in his word, then the following things must be supposed; viz., that it is the will of God that his people be much in prayer for this event, and particularly that it is God's revealed will and purpose, that, a little before the accomplishment of it, his people be earnestly seeking and waiting, and importunately and incessantly crying to God for it; but yet that it was God's design, that before this time comes of extraordinary prayer and importunity of his church, for the bringing on this glorious event, his church should have it given them to understand precisely when

the appointed time should be; and that accordingly he has now actually brought the fixed time to light, by means of Mr. Lowman. But it is reasonable to suppose, that this should be God's manner of dealing with his church, first to make known to them the precise time which he has unalterably fixed for the showing this mercy to Zion, and then make it the duty of his church, in an extraordinary manner, to be by prayer inquiring of him concerning it, and saying, *How long, Lord!* And waiting for it, day and night crying to him with exceeding importunity that he would bring it on, that he would come quickly, that he would hide himself no longer, but would arise and have mercy upon Zion, and awake as one out of sleep, openly manifest himself, and make bare his holy arm for the salvation of his people! That *they that make mention of the Lord, should not keep silence, nor give him any rest, until he establish, and make Jerusalem a praise in the earth!* And that the church should then say to Christ, *Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart on the mountains of spices!*

It may be many ways for the comfort and benefit of God's church in her afflicted state, to know that the reign of Antichrist is to be no more than 1260 years: and some things in general may be argued concerning the approach of it, when it is near: as the Jews could argue the approach of Christ's first coming from Daniel's prophecy of the seventy weeks, though they knew not precisely when that seventy weeks would end. But it is not reasonable to expect that God should make known to us beforehand, the precise time of Christ's coming in his kingdom. The disciples desired to know this, and manifested their desire to their Lord; but he told them plainly that *it was not for them to know the times and seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power*, Acts i. 6, 7; and there is no reason to think that it is any more for us than for them; or for Christ's disciples in these days any more than for his apostles in those days. God makes it the duty of his church to be importunately praying for it, that it may come speedily; and not only to be praying for it, but to be seeking of it, in the use of proper means; endeavoring that religion may now revive everywhere, and Satan's kingdom be overthrown; and always to be waiting for it, being in a constant preparation for it, as servants that wait for the coming of their Lord, or virgins for the coming of the bridegroom, not knowing at what hour he will come. But God's making known beforehand the precise time of his coming, does not well consist with these things.

It is the revealed will of God, that he should be inquired of by his people, by extraordinary prayer, concerning this great mercy, to do it for them, before it be fulfilled. And if any suppose, that it is now found out precisely when the time is to be, and (the time being at a considerable distance) that now is not a proper season to begin this extraordinary prayer, I would, on this supposition, ask when we shall begin? How long before the fixed and known time of the bestowment of this mercy comes, shall we begin to cry earnestly to God that this mercy may come, and that Christ would make haste and be like a roe, &c.? For us to delay, supposing that we know the time to be far off, is not agreeable to the language of God's people in my text, *Come, let us go speedily, and pray before the Lord, and seek the Lord of hosts.*

Ans. 2. I acknowledge that Mr. Lowman's exposition of the Revelation is, on many accounts, excellently written, giving great light into some parts of that prophecy, and an instance of the fulfilment of that prediction, Dan. xii. 4, "Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased:" and especially in his interpretation of the five first vials (which he supposes already poured out), exceeding satisfying. But yet the opinion of Mr. Lowman, with regard to the particular time of the beginning and end of the time, times and a

half of Antichrist's reign, and of all others that pretend to fix the time, is the less to be regarded, because it is clearly revealed, and expressly declared by God, that that matter should be sealed up and hid, and not known until the time of the end of this time, times and a half. Daniel, in the last chapter of his prophecy, gives us an account, how the angel told him of a future time of great trouble and affliction to the church of God, and then said to him, ver. 4, "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end." And then the prophet proceeds to give an account of a vision that he had of one earnestly inquiring of the angel of the Lord, how long it would be to the end of this remarkable and wonderful time of the church's trouble, saying, *How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?* ver. 5. 6. The answer was, that *it should be for a time, times and a half;* and that when so long a time was past, then this wonderful affliction and scattering of the holy people should be finished, ver. 7. But then Daniel tells us, in the next verse, that *he heard, but he understood not*, and said, *O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?* He did not understand that general and mystical answer, that those things should have an end at the end of a time, times and a half; he did not know by it, when this period would have an end: and therefore he inquires more particularly what the time of the end was. But the angel replies, ver. 9, "Go thy way, Daniel, the words are closed and sealed up, until the time of the end." I do not know what could have been more express. The angel gently rebukes this over inquisitiveness of Daniel, very much as Christ did a like inquisitiveness of the disciples concerning the same matter, when he said to them, *It is not for you to know the times and seasons, that the Father hath put in his own power.* I think there can be no doubt but that this space, of a time, times and half, of the church's great trouble, about the end of which Daniel inquires, is the same with that time, times and half, that is spoken of chap. vii. 25, and Rev. xii. 14, as the time of Antichrist's reign, and the church's being in the wilderness; and not merely the time of the church's troubles by Antiochus Epiphanes. But we see, when Daniel has a mind to know particularly when this time would come to an end, he is bid to go away, and rest contented in ignorance of this matter: for, says the man clothed in linen, *the words are closed up, and sealed, until the time of the end.* That is, very plainly, the matter that you inquire about, when the end of this time, and times and half shall come, shall not be known, but kept a great secret, until the time of the end actually comes, and all attempts to find it out before that shall be in vain. And therefore when a particular divine appears, that thinks he has found it out, and has unsealed this matter, and made it manifest with very manifold and abundant evidence, we may well think he is mistaken, and doubt whether those supposed evidences are truly solid ones, and such as are indeed sufficient to make that matter manifest, which God has declared should be kept hid, and not made manifest before it is accomplished.

Mr. Lowman's own words in his preface, pages 24, 25, are here worthy to be repeated: "It will (says he) ever be a point of wisdom, not to be over busy, or over confident in any thing, especially in fixing periods of time, or determining seasons; which it may be are not to be determined, it may be are not fit to be known. It is a maxim of greater wisdom than is usually thought, *Seek not to know what should not be revealed.* Such are many future events. The precise time of our Saviour's coming to judgment, was not revealed, because not fit to be revealed. The uncertainty of his appearance was of greater service to preserve a care of religion, than the revelation of it would have been: for the uncertainty itself gives many useful exhortations; *Watch, for ye know*

not what hour the Son of man cometh. Suppose then some of the events described in this prophecy should be of doubtful application, suppose the precise time of the downfall of the beast, the slaying and resurrection of the witnesses, and the beginning of a thousand years happy state of the church, should not be so determined, but it would admit of different calculations; may it not be wise, and therefore fit it should be so? The certainty of those events in a proper time, though that time should not be precisely determined, will answer the greater ends of useful instruction. And if the revelation should go no further than this, it would yet be a revelation, of great benefit and advantage; as the certainty of the day of judgment in its proper time surely is, though of that day and hour knoweth no man."

Ans. 3. Though it is not for us to know the precise time of the fall of Antichrist, yet I humbly conceive that we have no reason to suppose the event principally intended in the prophecies of Antichrist's destruction to be at so great a distance, as Mr. Lowman places it; but have reason to think it to be much nearer. Not that I would set up myself as a person of equal judgment with Mr. Lowman in matters of this nature. As he differs from most others of the most approved expositors of the Apocalypse, in this matter, so I hope it will not appear vanity and presumption in me, to differ from this particular expositor, and to agree with the greater number. And since his opinion stands so much in the way of that great and important affair, to promote which is the very end of this whole discourse, I hope it will not look as though I affected to appear considerable among the interpreters of prophecy, and as a person of skill in these mysterious matters, that I offer some reasons against Mr. Lowman's opinion. It is surely great pity, that it should be received as a thing clear and abundantly confirmed, that the glorious day of Antichrist's fall is at so great a distance (so directly tending to damp and discourage all earnest prayers for, or endeavors after its speedy accomplishment), unless there be good and plain ground for it. I would therefore offer some things to consideration, which I think may justly make us look upon the opinion of this learned interpreter, of this happy event's being at so great a distance, not so certain and indubitable, as to hinder our praying and hoping for its being fulfilled much sooner.

The period of Antichrist's reign, as their author has fixed it, seems to be the main point insisted on in his exposition of the Revelation; which he supposes a great many things in the scheme of prophecies delivered in that book do concur to establish. And indeed it is so with respect to the scheme of interpretation of these prophecies, which he goes into, and finds it requisite to maintain, in order to confirm this point. But there are several things in that scheme, that appear to me justly liable to exception.

Whereas it it represented, Rev. xvii. 10, 11, that there are seven different successive heads of the beast; that five were past, and another was to come, and to continue a short space, that might on some accounts be reckoned a seventh; and that Antichrist was to follow next after this, as the eighth; but yet the foregoing not being properly one of the heads of the beast, he was properly the seventh; Mr. Lowman does not think with others, that by the seventh that was to continue a short space, which would not be properly one of the heads of the beast, is meant Constantine and the other Christian emperors (for he thinks they are reckoned as properly belonging to the sixth head of the beast); but that hereby is intended the government that Rome was subject to under the Gothic princes, and the exarchate of Ravenna, after the imperial form of government in Rome ceased in Augustulus, until the Pope was invested with his temporal dominion, called St Peter's Patrimony, by Pepin, king of France, in the year

756. And he supposes, that that wounding of one of the heads of the beast with a sword unto death, that we read of chap. xiii. 3, and 14, was not fulfilled in the destruction of the Heathen empire, and the giving the imperial power unto Christians, but in the destruction of the imperial form of government, by the sword of the Goths, in the time of Augustulus. But it seems to me to be very unlikely, that the Spirit of God should reckon Constantine and the Christian emperors as proper members, and belonging to one of the heads, of that monstrous, wild and cruel beast, that is compared to a leopard and a bear, and a devouring lion, and that had a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and that rules by the power and authority of the dragon, or the devil;* which beast is represented in this very 17th chapter, as full of names of blasphemy, and of a bloody color, denoting his exceeding cruelty in persecuting the Christian church. For Constantine, intead of this, was a member of the Christian church, and set by God in the most eminent station in his church; and was honored above all other princes that ever had been in the world, as the great protector of his church, and her deliverer from the persecuting power of that cruel scarlet-colored beast. Mr. Lowman himself styles him a Christian prince, and protector of the Christian religion. God is very careful not to reckon his own people among the Gentiles, the visible subjects of Satan: Num. xxiii. 9, "The people shall not be reckoned among the nations." God will not enrol them with them; if they happen to be among them, he will be careful to set a mark upon them, as a note of distinction, Rev. vii. 3, &c.; when God is reckoning up his own people, he leaves out those that have been noted for idolatry. As among the tribes that were sealed, Rev. viii., those idolatrous tribes of Ephraim and Dan are left out, and in the genealogy of Christ, Matt. i., those princes that were chiefly noted for idolatry, are left out. Much more would God be careful not to reckon his own people, especially such Christian princes as have been the most eminent instruments of overthrowing idolatry, amongst idolaters, and as members and heads of that kingdom that is noted in Scripture as the most notorious and infamous of all, for abominable idolatry, and opposition and cruelty to the true worshippers of God. And especially not to reckon them as properly belonging to one of those seven heads of this monarchy, of which very heads it is particularly noted that they had on them the names of blasphemy (Rev. xiii. 1); which Mr. Lowman himself supposes to signify idolatry. It was therefore worthy of God, agreeable to his manner, and what might well be expected, that when he was reckoning up the several successive heads of this beast, and Constantine and his successors came in the way, and there was occasion to mention them, to set a mark, or note of distinction on them, signifying that they did not properly belong to the beast, nor were to be reckoned as belonging to his heads; and therefore are to be skipped over in the reckoning; and Antichrist, though the eighth head of the Roman empire, is to be reckoned the seventh head of the beast. This appears to me abundantly the most just and natural interpretation of Rev. xvii. 10, 11. It is reasonable to suppose that God would take care to make such a note in this prophetical description of this dreadful beast, and not by any means to reckon Constantine as belonging properly to him. If we reckon Constantine as a member of this beast, having seven heads and ten horns, described chap. xvii., and as properly one of his heads, then he was also properly a member of the great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, that warred with the woman, chap xii. For the seven heads and ten horns of that dragon, are plainly the same with the

* The word *Therion* signifies a wild savage beast, as Mr. Lowman himself observes, page 127.

seven heads and ten horns of this beast. So that this makes Constantine a visible member of the devil: for we are told expressly of that dragon, ver. 9, that he was "that old serpent, called the devil and Satan." And to suppose that Constantine is reckoned as belonging to one of the heads of that dragon, is to make these prophecies inconsistent with themselves. For here in this 12th chapter we have represented a war between the dragon and the woman clothed with the sun; which woman, as all agree, is the church; but Constantine, as all do also agree, belonged to the woman, was a member of the Christian church, and was on that side in the war against the dragon, yea, was the main instrument of that great victory that was obtained over the dragon, there spoken of, ver. 9—12. What an inconsistency therefore is it, to suppose that he was at the same time a member and head of that very dragon which fought with the woman, and yet which Constantine himself fought with, overcame, and gloriously triumphed over! It is not therefore to be wondered at, that God was careful to distinguish Constantine from the proper heads of the beast: it would have been a wonder if he had not. God seems to have been careful to distinguish him, not only in his word, but in his providence, by so ordering it that this Christian emperor should be removed from Rome, the city that God had given up to be the seat of the power of the beast and of its heads, and that he should have the seat of his empire elsewhere.

Constantine was made the instrument of giving a mortal wound to the heathen Roman empire; and giving it a mortal wound in its head, viz., the heathen emperors that were then reigning, Maxentius and Licinius. But more eminently was this glorious change in the empire owing to the power of God's word, the prevalence of the glorious gospel, by which Constantine himself was converted, and so became the instrument of the overthrow of the heathen empire in the east and west. The change that was then brought to pass, is represented as the destruction of the heathen empire, or the old heathen world; and therefore seems to be compared to that dissolution of heaven and earth that shall be at the day of judgment, Rev. vi. 12, to the end. And therefore well might the heathen empire under the head which was then reigning, be represented as wounded to death, chap. xiii. 3. It is much more likely that the wound the beast had by a sword, in his head, spoken of ver. 14, was the wound that the heathen empire had in its head, by that sword that we read of chap. i. 16, and xix. 15, that proceeds out of the mouth of Christ, than the wound that was given to the Christian empire and emperor by the sword of the heathen Goths. It is most likely that this deadly wound was by that sword with which Michael made war with him, and overcame him, and cast him to the earth, chap. xii. 9, and that the deadly wound that was given him, was given him at that very time. It is most likely, that the sword that gave him this deadly wound, after which he strangely revived, as though he rose from the dead, was the same sword with that which is spoken of, as what shall at last utterly destroy him, so that he shall never rise more, chap. xix. 15, 19, 20, 21. This wounding of the head of the beast by the destruction of the heathen empire, and conversion of the emperor to the Christian truth, was a glorious event indeed of divine Providence, worthy to be so much spoken of in prophecy. It is natural to suppose, that the mortal wounding of the head of that savage cruel beast, that is represented as constantly at war with the woman, and persecuting the church of Christ, should be some relief to the Christian church: but on the contrary that wounding to death that Mr. Lowman speaks of, was the victory of the enemies of the Christian church over her, and the wound she received from them.

It is said of that head of the empire that shall be next after the sixth head,

and next before Antichrist, and that is not reckoned as properly one of the number of the heads of the beast, that *when it comes, it shall continue a short space*, chap. xvii. 10. By which we may well understand, at least, that it shall be one of the shortest in its continuance, of the successive heads. But the government seated at Ravenna, in the hands of the Goths, or of the deputies of the Greek emperors (which Mr. Lowman supposes to be meant by this head), continued, as Mr. Lowman himself takes notice, very near 300 years. And if so, its continuance was one of the longest of the heads mentioned.

And besides, if the government that Rome was under, from the time that Augustulus abdicated, to the when time the Pope was confirmed in his temporal dominion, was meant by that seventh head that was to be between the imperial head and the papal, there would doubtless have been two different heads mentioned, instead of one, between the emperor and the Pope; viz., first, the Gothic princes, which reigned near a hundred years: secondly, the Exarchs of Ravenna, which governed for about 185 years. The Gothic kingdom was much more properly a distinct government from the imperial, than the Exarchate of Ravenna. For during the Exarchate, Rome was under the government of the emperor, as much as it was in Constantine's time.

In Rev. xvii. 12, it is said, the "ten horns are ten kings, which are to receive power as kings one hour with the beast," or (as Mr. Lowman says it ought to have been translated) "the same hour or point of time with the beast." This will not allow the time when Antichrist first receives power as king, to be so late as Mr. Lowman supposes. This division of the empire into many kingdoms, denoted by the number ten, was about the year 456, after Gensericus had taken the city of Rome: but Mr. Lowman places the beginning of the reign of Antichrist in the year 756, which is 300 years later. I know, such an expression as in one hour, or the same hour, may allow some latitude; but surely not such a latitude as this. This is a much longer time, than it was from the time of the vision to Constantine; much longer than the space of all the first six seals; longer than it was from Christ's ascension to Constantine; and near as long as the time of all the reigns of the heathen emperors put together, from Augustus Cæsar to Constantine. An hour is everywhere, in the other places in this book of Revelation, used to signify a very short time; as may be seen in places cited in the margin.* And the expression, the same hour, everywhere else in the Bible, intends near the same point of time.† The phrase one hour is used several times in the next chapter, speaking of the downfall of Antichrist:‡ and each time, evidently signifies a very short space of time. And there is no reason why we should not understand the same phrase in the same sense, when it is used here concerning the rise of Antichrist.

Mr. Lowman greatly insists upon it, that what is spoken as containing 1260 days, is not so much any spiritual authority or ecclesiastical power of the Pope, over the nations of Christendom, as his temporal government and dominion in that individual city of Rome; and therefore to determine when these 1260 days or years began, and when they will end, we must consider when the Pope first received this his temporal power over this city of Rome, and the neighboring regions, called St. Peter's Patrimony. But I can see no good reason for this. Indeed it is strange, if it be so. God has been pleased in these revelations and prophecies, which he has given for the benefit of his church in general, to speak much concerning an Antichristian power that should arise, that should perse-

* Rev. xviii. 10, 17, 19, chap. xi. 3, iii. 10, viii. 3, ix. 15, xiv. 7. † Dan. iii. 6, iv. 33, v. 5, Matt. viii. 13, x. 19, Luke vii. 21, xii. 2, xx. 19, xxiv. 33, John iv. 53, Acts xvi. 18, 33, xxii. 13, Rev. xi. 13. ‡ Verses 10, 17, 19.

cute the saints, and scatter the power of the holy people, and be an occasion of great affliction to the church of Christ; and in these revelations, in both Old Testament and New, has declared and often repeated it, that his dominion shall continue so long, and no longer; and for the comfort of his church in general, Christ hath sworn with great solemnity, that the continuance of this persecuting power shall be thus limited, Dan. xii. 7.

Now it would be strange, if in all this the thing principally intended is not that dominion of this Antichristian power that chiefly concerns the church of Christ in general, but merely his temporal dominion over one province in Italy, called St. Peter's Patrimony. Doubtless that dominion of Antichrist which the prophecies insist upon and describe, is the dominion whose duration and limits those prophecies declare. But the dominion of Antichrist which the prophecies insist upon and describe, is not any dominion over a particular province in Italy, but the dominion by which he succeeds the four great *monarchies of the world*, Dan. vii. The dominion by which he *succeeds the dragon in his power, throne and great authority*, Rev. xiii. 2. The dominion in which he has *power given him over all kindreds, tongues and nations*, ver. 7. The dominion by which *the great whore sits on many waters* (chap xvii. 1), which the angel explains to be *peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues* (ver. 15), and the dominion in which he *reigns over the ten kings*, into which the Roman empire is divided, Rev. xiii. 1, and xvii. 3, 12, 13. The beast that had ten horns, is not the city of Rome and the neighboring region, but the Roman empire; they are the horns or the kings, not of the city, but of the empire. If we consider what is expressed in the passages themselves, which speak of the three years and half of Antichrist, they will lead us to understand something very diverse from the duration of his temporal dominion over St. Peter's patrimony. In Dan. vii. 25, the time, times and a half, of the little horn, is expressly the continuance of time wherein *it shall be given to him to change times and laws, and wear out the saints of the Most High;* and in chap. xiii. 7, it is spoken of as *the time of his scattering the power of the holy people.* In Rev. xi. 2, the forty and two months is spoken of as the time of Antichrist's *treading under foot the court of the temple, and the holy city;* i. e., the external or visible Christian church abroad in the world, or the nations of Christendom. In ver. 3, the twelve hundred and sixty days of Antichrist are spoken of as the time of the *witnesses prophesying in sackcloth;* and in chap. xii. 6, and 14, the time of the *woman's being in the wilderness*, which was through the great power that Antichrist had over the Christian world, and not his small temporal dominion in Italy.

It is true, some regard is had in the prophecies to the city of Rome, the city built on seven hills: which, being the fountain of all rule and authority in the Roman monarchy, and the capital city of the empire, from whence the whole empire was denominated, and the place where the head of the empire usually resided, was properly made use of by the angel, Rev. xvii. 9, 18, to show what empire Antichrist should rule over, and what city he should usually reside in. And this is all that can be meant by the words of the angel; and not that those streets and walls, and that very ground, were such main and essential things in what the prophecy intended by the beast; that when Antichrist's dominion began in that place, then the beast ceases. For if so, then it will follow, that the beast had his head wounded to death a second time, and ceased to be, when the Popes resided at Avignon in France, for the best part of a century; when not only the Popes did not reside at Rome, nor in any part of St. Peter's patrimony, nor any part of Italy; but some of them were neither Romans nor Italians. Though the angel says of the great whore, Rev xvii. 18, "The woman

which thou sawest, is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth:" yet by the city, in this case, is not meant so much what was contained within those Roman walls, as the Roman empire; as is evident by chap. xi. 8, "And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt." Here, by the great city, neither Mr. Lowman himself, nor I suppose any other Protestant interpreter, understands the city of Rome, strictly speaking, but the Roman monarchy.

And though it be true, as Mr. Lowman observes, the Pope's ecclesiastical monarchy, and power, and influence, through Christendom, was greatly established and advanced by Pepin's making him a temporal prince over the exarchate of Ravenna; yet, I would ask, whether the Pope's power and influence in the world, and his ability to disturb the quiet of the nations of Christendom, and (as it is expressed in Daniel) *to change times and laws*, and to carry his own designs, in the various countries and kingdoms of Europe, was not greater before Pepin, than it is now, and has been for a long time? And yet Mr. Lowman supposes that now is properly the time of Antichrist's reign, that the twelve hundred and sixty years of his reign continues, and will continue for about two hundred and seventy years longer; though his power be now so small, and has been declining ever since the reformation, and still declines continually.

One thing that Mr. Lowman supposes confirms his opinion of so late a beginning of the twelve hundred and sixty years of the reign of the beast, is the order of the several periods of this prophecy, and the manner of their succeeding one another.

As to his particular scheme of the seven periods, so divided and limited, and so obviously ranked in such order, and following one another in such direct and continued succession, and each ending in a state of peace, safety and happiness to the church of God, it seems to me to be more ingenious than solid, and that many things might be said to demonstrate it not to be founded in the truth of things, and the real design of the divine Author of this prophecy. But now to enter into a particular and full examination of it, would be to lengthen out this discourse far beyond its proper limits. I would only observe (which directly concerns my present purpose) that to make out this scheme, Mr Lowman supposes that the fifth and sixth trumpets, that bring on the two first woes, and the whole 9th chapter of the Revelation, altogether respects the Saracens. But it appears to me not very credible that the Saracens should have so much said of them in this prophecy, as to have a whole chapter taken up about them, and not a word in the whole prophecy be said about the Turks who immediately succeeded them* in the same religion, and proceeding on the same principles, and were so much more considerable, and brought vastly greater calamities on the Christian world, and have set up and long maintained one of the greatest, strongest and most extraordinary empires that ever the world saw, and have been the most terrible scourge to Christendom, that ever divine Providence made use of, and one of the greatest of all God's plagues on the world of mankind.

Mr. Lowman, in pursuance of his scheme, also supposes (which is yet more incredible) this period of the trumpets ends in *a state of safety, peace and happiness to the church of God;* so that, on that occasion, *there are great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our*

* For though it be true, that the reign of Othman, or Ottoman, who began what they call the Ottoman empire, was a long time after this; yet the Turks themselves, under other princes in the government they set up in territories that had formerly been possessed by Christians, and in their overrunning and ravaging Christian countries, immediately succeeded the Saracens; and from thenceforward have been a terrible, and almost continual scourge to the church.

Lord and of his Christ, chap. xi. 15.* And yet he supposes, that it issues in setting up the kingdom of Antichrist; and that about that very time, when these heavenly voices so joyfully proclaimed this, the beast was enthroned, and the time, times and half, or twelve hundred and sixty days of his reign began, which is spoken of everywhere, as the time of the church's greatest darkness and trouble, the time wherein *the little horn should wear out the saints of the Most High*, Dan. vii. 25. *The time appointed for his scattering the power of the holy people*, Dan. xii. 7. *The time of the woman's being in the wilderness*, Rev. xii. 6, 14. The time of *treading under foot the court of the temple*, chap. xi. 2. And the time of *the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth*, chap. xi. 3.

However, I do not deny that the time when Mr. Lowman supposes the reign of the beast began, even the time when Pepin confirmed to the Pope his temporal dominions in Italy, was a time of the great increase and advancement of the power of Antichrist in the world, and a notable epoch. And if I may be allowed humbly to offer what appears to me to be the truth with relation to the rise and fall of Antichrist, it is this. As the power of Antichrist, and the corruption of the apostate church, rose not at once, but by several notable steps and degrees; so it will in the like manner fall: and that divers steps and seasons of destruction to the spiritual Babylon, and revival and advancement of the true church, are prophesied of under one. Though it be true, that there is some particular event that prevails above all others in the intention of the prophecy, some one remarkable season of the destruction of the church of Rome and papal power and corruption, and advancement of true religion, that the prophecies have a principal respect to.

It was certainly thus with regard to the prophecies of the destruction of old Babylon, and the church's deliverance from captivity and oppression by that city and kingdom; which is abundantly alluded to in these prophecies of the Revelation, as a noted type of the oppression of the church of Christ by the church of Rome, calling the latter so often by the name of Babylon, and the church of Christ Jerusalem. The captivity of the Jews by the Babylonians was not perfected at once, but was brought on by several notable steps. So neither was the restoration of the Jewish church, after the captivity, perfected at once. It was several times foretold, that the duration of the captivity should be seventy years; and also, that after seventy years were accomplished, God would destroy Babylon, Jer. xxv. 11, 12, &c. But this period had manifestly several different beginnings, and several endings. Thus from Jehoiakim's captivity to Cyrus's decree, for the return of the Jews, and the rebuilding of Jerusalem, was seventy years. And from Zedekiah's captivity to Darius's decree, Ezra vi., seventy years. And from the last carrying away of all, Jer. lii. 30, to the finishing and dedication of the temple, was also seventy years. So also the prophecies of Babylon's destruction were fulfilled by several steps. These prophecies seem to have a principal respect to that destruction that was accomplished by Cyrus, at the end of the first seventy years forementioned: but there were other things in the very same prophecies, that were not fulfilled until the 4th year of Darius; when what remained of Babylon was subject to another dreadful destruction; which in a great measure completed its desolation; which was at the end of the second seventy years, and at the same time that the restoration of the Jews was perfected by the decree of Darius.† But yet, there were many other things contained in the same prophecies of Babylon's destruction, rendering it thenceforward perfectly and perpetually desolate, and the haunt of serpents and wild

* Preface of his Paraphrase, &c., p. 13, 14, and 16.
† Prideaux's Connection, Part I. p. 183, 184, and 267, 268, 269. Edit. 9, and p. 271, and 272.

beasts, that were not fulfilled until more than two hundred years after, in the time of Seleucus king of Syria.* So also it was with respect to the prophecies of the destruction of Tyre, in the 26th, 27th and 28th chapters of Ezekiel; from which many of the expressions used in the Revelation, concerning the destruction of the kingdom of Antichrist, are taken, and which is evidently made use of in Scripture as a type of the latter. These prophecies of the destruction of Tyre were fulfilled by various steps. Many things were fulfilled in the destruction of the old city by Nebuchadnezzar;† and yet other parts of the same prophecy were fulfilled by Alexander;‡ which was about two hundred and forty years afterwards. And yet both these desolations are prophesied of under one.

And thus it seems to me very probable, that it will prove, with respect to the prophecies of the destruction of mystical Babylon. It is I think pretty manifest by the prophecies, that this Antichristian hierarchy and apostate church will at last be so destroyed, that there shall be no remainders of it left, and shall have as perfect a desolation, before God has done with her, as old Babylon had; there shall be no such thing as Pope or church of Rome in the world.§ It seems also pretty manifest that after that event that is chiefly intended in the prophecies of Antichrist's destruction, there will be some remains of the Romish church. This appears by that most particular and large description of that destruction, Rev. xviii. There it seems to be implied, not only that many shall yet remain of the church of Rome, that shall bewail her overthrow, of her people and clergy, ver. 11, 15, 17, 18, but that there should be some princes among them, kings of the earth, that have committed fornication, and lived deliciously with her, ver. 9, 10. And it is exceeding improbable in itself, that every Papist, in each quarter of the world, should be destroyed, or cease from the world, at one blow. And as long as so considerable a number remains, as may be gathered from the prophecy, they will doubtless have a hierarchy; and there will be one among them that will bear the name of a Pope. Although the church of Rome shall be mainly destroyed, and the interest of Popery shall be sunk very low in the world; so that there will yet remain such a thing as a Papal church and hierarchy in the world, to be wholly extirpated at another period, some time after that great overthrow principally insisted on in the prophecies. And this second destruction of Antichrist, or rather extirpation of his remains together with the complete extirpation of all the remains of Mahometanism, Heathenism and Heresy through the world, and the finishing stroke towards the overthrow of Satan's visible kingdom on earth, and so the beginning of the Millennium or spiritual rest of the world, may, for aught I know, be about the time Mr. Lowman speaks of; agreeable to the opinion of the ancient Jews, and many Christian divines that have followed them, that the world would stand six thousand years; and then, the seventh thousand years should be the world's rest or Sabbath. The ruin of the Popish interest is but a small part of what is requisite, in order to introduce and settle such a state of things, as the world is represented as being in, in that Millennium that is described, Rev. xx., wherein Satan's visible kingdom is everywhere totally extirpated, and a perfect end put to all heresies, delusions and false religions whatsoever, through the whole earth and Satan thenceforward deceives the nations no more, and has no place any where but in hell. This is the Sabbatism of the world; when all shall be in a holy rest, when the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and there shall be nothing to hurt or offend, and there shall be abundance of peace, and the earth shall be

* Prideaux's Connection, Part I. p. 808—812. † Ibid. p. 128, 129, 130. ‡ Ibid. p. 693. § See Rev. xviii. 21—23, and xix. 20, 21. Dan. vii. 26, 27.

full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the seas, and God's people shall dwell in quiet resting places. There is not the least reason to think, that all this will be brought to pass as it were at one stroke, or that from the present lamentable state of things, there should be brought about and completed the destruction of the church of Rome, the entire extirpation of all infidelity, heresies, superstitions and schisms, through all Christendom, and the conversion of all the Jews, and the full enlightening and conversion of all Mahometan and Heathen nations, through the whole earth, on every side of the globe, and from the north to the south pole, and the full settlement of all in the pure Christian faith and order, all as it were in the issue of one battle, and by means of the victory of the church in one great conflict with her enemies. This would contradict many things in Scripture, which represent this great event to be brought to pass by a gradual progress of religion; as leaven that gradually spreads, until it has diffused itself through the whole lump; and a plant of mustard, which from a very small seed, gradually becomes a great tree, Matt. xiii. 31, 32, 33, *and like seed which a man casts into the ground, that springs and grows up, night and day; and first brings forth the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear.* And especially would this contradict the prophetical representation in Ezek. xlvii., where the progress of religion is represented by the gradual increase of the waters of the sanctuary; being first a small spring issuing out from under the threshold of the temple; and then, after they had run a thousand cubits, being up to the ankles; and at the end of another thousand cubits, up to the knees; and at the end of another thousand, up to the loins; and afterwards a great river, that could not be passed over; and being finally brought into the sea, and healing the waters even of the vast ocean.

If the Spirit of God should be immediately poured out, and that great work of God's power and grace should now begin, which in its progress and issue should complete this glorious effect; there must be an amazing and unparalleled progress of the work and manifestation of divine power to bring so much to pass by the year two thousand. Would it not be a great thing to be accomplished in one half century, that religion, in the power and purity of it, should so prevail, as to gain the conquest over all those many things that stand in opposition to it among Protestants, and gain the upper hand through the Protestant world? And if in another, it should go on so to prevail, as to get the victory over all the opposition and strength of the kingdom of Antichrist, so as to gain the ascendant in that which is now the Popish world? And if in a third half century, it should prevail and subdue the greater part of the Mahometan world, and bring in the Jewish nation, in all their dispersions? And then in the next whole century, the whole heathen world should be enlightened and converted to the Christian faith, throughout all parts of Africa, Asia, America and Terra Australis, and be thoroughly settled in Christian faith and order, without any remainders of their old delusions and superstitions, and this attended with an utter extirpation of the remnant of the church of Rome, and all the relics of Mahometanism, heresy, schism and enthusiasm, and a suppression of all remains of open vice and immorality, and every sort of visible enemy to true religion, through the whole earth, and bring to an end all the unhappy commotions, tumults, and calamities occasioned by such great changes, and all things so adjusted and settled through the world, that the world thenceforward should enjoy a holy rest or sabbatism?

I have thus distinguished what belongs to a bringing of the world from its present state, to the happy state of the Millennium, the better to give a view of the greatness of the work; and not, that I pretend so much as to conjecture,

that things will be accomplished just in this order. The whole work is not the less great and wonderful, to be accomplished in such a space of time, in whatever order the different parts of it succeed each other. They that think that what has been mentioned would not be swift progress, yea amazingly swift, do not consider how great the work is, and the vast and innumerable obstacles that are in the way. It was a wonderful thing, when the Christian religion, after Christ's ascension, so prevailed, as to get the ascendant in the Roman empire in about three hundred years; but that was nothing to this.

Ans. 4. There are, as I apprehend, good reasons to hope, that that work of God's Spirit will begin in a little time, which, in the progress of it, will overthrow the kingdom of Antichrist, and in its issue destroy Satan's visible kingdom on earth.

The prophecy of the sixth vial, Rev. xvi. 12—16, if we take it in its connection with the other vials, and consider those providential events, by which the preceding vials have manifestly been fulfilled, I humbly conceive affords just ground for such a hope.

It is very plain from this whole chapter, as also the preceding and following, that all these seven vials are vials of God's wrath on Antichrist; one is not poured out on the Jews, another on the Turks, another on Pagans, another on the church of Rome; but they all signify God's successive judgments or plagues on the beast and his kingdom, which is in this chapter and almost everywhere in this book, called great Babylon. And therefore undoubtedly, when it is said, *the sixth angel poured out his vial on the river Euphrates, and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared;* by the river Euphrates is meant something some way appertaining to this mystical Babylon; as that river that ran through Chaldea, called Euphrates, was something appertaining to the literal Babylon. And it is very manifest, that here is in the prophecy of this vial an allusion to that by which the way was prepared for the destruction of Babylon by Cyrus; which was by turning the channel of the river Euphrates, which ran through the midst of the city, whereby the way of the kings of the east, the princes of Media and Persia, was prepared to come in under the walls of the city, at each end, where the waters used to run, and destroy it; as they did that night wherein Daniel interpreted the handwriting on the wall, against Belshazzar, Dan. v. 20. The prophecies of Babylon's destruction, do from time to time take notice of this way of destroying her, by drying up the waters of the river Euphrates, to prepare the way for her enemies: Isa. xliv. 27, 28, *That saith to the deep, be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers; that saith of Cyrus, he is my servant, and shall perform all my pleasure.* Jer. li. 31, 32, *One post shall run to meet another, to show the king of Babylon that his city is taken at one end, and that the passages are stopped, and the reeds they have burnt with fire, and the men of war are affrighted.* And verse 36, *I will dry up her sea, and make her springs dry.* The Medes and Persians, the people that destroyed Babylon, dwelt to the eastward of Babylon, and are spoken of as coming from the east to her destruction, Isa. xlvi. 11. *Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel, from a far country.* And the princes that joined with this ravenous bird from the east, in this affair of destroying Babylon, are called kings, Jer. li. 11: *The Lord hath raised up the spirit of the kings of the Medes; for his device is against Babylon to destroy it.* Ver. 28, *Prepare against her the nations with the kings of the Medes, the captains thereof, and the rulers thereof.*—The drying the channel of the river Euphrates, to prepare the way for these kings and captains of the east, to enter into that city under its high walls, was the last thing

done by the besiegers of Babylon, before her actual destruction: as this sixth vial is the last vial of God's wrath but one, on the mystical Babylon; and the effect of it, the drying up the channel of the river Euphrates, is the last thing done against it, before its actual destruction by the seventh vial, and opens the way for those that fight in a spiritual war against it, speedily to bring on its ruin.

Hence I think it may without dispute be determined, that by the river Euphrates in the prophecy of this vial, is meant something appertaining or relating to the mystical Babylon, or the Antichristian church and kingdom, that serves that, or is a benefit to it, in a way answerable to that in which the river Euphrates served old Babylon, and the removal of which will in like manner prepare the way for her enemies to destroy her. And therefore what we have to do in the first place, in order to find out what is intended by the river Euphrates, in this prophecy, is to consider how the literal Euphrates served old Babylon. And it may be noted, that Euphrates was of remarkable benefit to that city in two respects: it served the city as a supply; it was let through the midst of the city by an artificial canal, and ran through the midst of the palace of the king of Babylon; that part of his palace called the old palace, standing on one side, and the other part called the new palace, on the other; with communications from one part to another, above the waters, by a bridge, and under the waters, by a vaulted or arched passage; that the city, and especially the palace, might have the convenience of its waters, and be plentifully supplied with water. And another way that the waters of Euphrates served Babylon, was as an impediment and obstacle in the way of its enemies, to hinder their access to it to destroy it. For there was a vast moat round the city, without the walls, of prodigious width and depth, filled with the water of the river, to hinder the access of her besiegers: and at each end of the city, the river served instead of walls. And therefore when Cyrus had dried up the river, the moat was emptied, and the channel of the river under the walls left dry; and so his way was prepared.

And therefore it is natural to suppose, that by drying up the waters of the river Euphrates, in the prophecies of the destruction of the new Babylon, to prepare the way of her enemies, is meant the drying up her incomes and supplies; and the removal of those things that hitherto have been the chief obstacles in the way of those that in this book are represented as at war with her and seeking her destruction, spoken of Rev. xix. 11, to the end, and chap. xii. 7, that have hindered their progress and success, or that have been the chief impediments in the way of the Protestant religion. The first thing is the drying the streams of the wealth of the new Babylon, the temporal supplies, revenues and vast incomes of the Romish church, and riches of the Popish dominions. Waters in Scripture language very often signify provision and supplies, both temporal and spiritual; as in Prov. ix. 17, Isa. xxxiii. 16, xliii. 20, lv. 1, and lviii. 11, Jer. ii. 13 and 18, xvii. 8 and 13, and in other places innumerable. The temporal supplies of a people are very often in Scripture called waters; as Isa. v. 13, *Therefore my people is gone into captivity, and their honorable men are famished, and their multitude dried up with thirst*, i. e., deprived of the supports and supplies of life. And the drying up the waters of a city or kingdom, is often used in Scripture prophecy, for the depriving them of their wealth, as the Scripture explains itself, Hos. xiii. 15: "His spring shall become dry, and his fountain shall be dried up; he shall spoil the treasure of all pleasant vessels." Isa. xv. 6, 7, "The waters of Nimrim shall be desolate; for the hay is withered away; the grass faileth; there is no green thing. Therefore the abundance

they have gotten, and that which they have laid up, shall they carry away to the brook of the willows." By the brook of the willows there seems to be a reference to the waters of Assyria or Chaldea, whose streams abounded with willows (compare Psal. cxxxvii. 2). So that the carrying away the treasures of Moab, and adding of them to the treasures of Assyria, is here represented by the figure of turning away the waters of Nimrim from the country of Moab, and adding them to the waters of Assyria, as the prophecy explains itself. Yea, even in the prophecies of the destruction of Babylon itself, the depriving her of her treasures, seems to be one thing intended by the drying up of her waters. This seems manifest by the words of the prophecy in Jer. l. 37, 38: "A sword is upon her treasures, and they shall be robbed; a drought is upon her waters, and they shall be dried up." Compared with chap. li. 15, "O thou that dwellest upon many waters, abundant in treasures;" with ver. 36, "I will dry up her sea, and make her springs dry." The wealth, revenues, and the vast incomes of the church of Rome, are the waters by which that Babylon has been nourished and supported; these are the waters which the Popish clergy and the members of the Romish hierarchy thirst after, and are continually drinking down, with insatiable appetite; and they are waters that have been flowing into that spiritual city like a great river; ecclesiastical persons possessing a very great part of the Popish dominions: as this Babylon is represented as vastly rich, in this prophecy of the Apocalypse, especially in the 17th and 18th chapters. These are especially the waters that supply the palace of the king of this new Babylon, viz., the Pope; as the river Euphrates ran through the midst of the palace of the king of old Babylon. The revenues of the Pope have been like the waters of a great river, coming into his palace, from innumerable fountains, and by innumerable branches and lesser streams, coming from many various and distant countries.

This prophecy represents to us two cities very contrary the one to the other; viz., New Babylon and the New Jerusalem, and a river running through the midst of each. The new Jerusalem, which signifies the church of Christ, especially in her best estate, is described as having a river running through the midst of it, Rev. xxii. 1, 2. This river, as might easily be made most evident, by comparing this with abundance of other Scriptures, undoubtedly signifies the divine supplies, and rich and abundant spiritual incomes and provision of that holy city. Mr. Lowman, in his late exposition, says, *It represents a constant provision for the comfortable and happy life of all the inhabitants of this city of God.* And in his notes on the same place, observes as follows: "Water (says he), as necessary to the support of life, and as it contributes in great cities, especially in hot eastern countries, to the ornament of the place, and delight of the inhabitants, is a very proper representation of the enjoyment of all things, both for the support and pleasure of life." As the river that runs through the new Jerusalem, the church of Christ, that refreshes that holy spiritual society, signifies their spiritual supplies, to satisfy their spiritual thirst; so the river that runs through the new Babylon, the Antichristian church, that wicked carnal society, signifies, according to the opposite character of the city, her worldly, carnal supplies, to satisfy their carnal desires and thirstings.

This new Jerusalem is called in this book the paradise of God; and therefore is represented as having the tree of life growing in it, chap. ii. 7, and xxii. 2. And it being described, as though a river ran through the midst of it, there seems to be some allusion to the ancient paradise in Eden, of which we are told that there ran a river through the midst of it to water it, Gen. ii. 10; i. e., to supply the plants of it with nourishment. And this river was this very same

river Euphrates, that afterwards ran through Babylon. And in one and the other it represented the divers supplies of two opposite cities: in Eden it represented the spiritual supplies and wealth of the true Christian church, in her spiritual advancement and glory; and seems to be so made use of Rev. xxii. 1, 2. In the other it represented the outward carnal supplies of the false Antichristian church, in her worldly pomp and vainglory, chap. xvi. 12.

When the waters that supply this mystical Babylon, come to be dried up in this sense, it will prepare the way for the enemies of Antichristian corruption, that seek her overthrow. The wealth of the church of Rome, and of the powers that support it, is very much its defence. After the streams of her revenues and riches are dried up, or very greatly diminished, her walls will be as it were broken down, and she will become weak and defenceless, and exposed to easy ruin.

When Joab had taken that part of the city of Rabbah, that was called the city of waters, whence the city had its supply of water, the fountains of the brook Jabbok being probably there; and which was also called the royal city, probably because there the king had his palace and gardens, on the account of its peculiar pleasantness; I say, when he had taken this, the conquest of the rest of the city was easy; his message to David implies that the city now might be taken at pleasure, 2 Sam. xii. 27, 28. It is possible that by the pouring out of the sixth vial to dry up the river of the mystical Babylon, there may be something like the taking the city of waters in Rabbah; some one of the chief of the Popish powers, that has been the main strength and support of the Popish cause, or from whence that church has its chief supplies, may be destroyed, or converted, or greatly reduced. But this, events must determine.

In the prophecies of Egypt's destruction, it is signified, that when their rivers and waters should be dried up, in that sense, that the streams of their temporal supplies should be averted from them, their defence would be gone: Isa. xix. 4, &c., "The Egyptians will I give over into the hand of a cruel lord; and the waters shall fail from the sea, and the river shall be wasted and dried up, and the brooks of defence shall be emptied and dried up, and the reeds and flags shall wither; every thing sown by the brooks shall wither: the fishers also shall mourn."

Those whose way was prepared to come in and destroy Babylon, by the drying up the river Euphrates, were the army that was at war with Babylon, Cyrus the king, and his host, that sought her overthrow: so there seems to be all reason to suppose, that those whose way will be prepared to come in and destroy mystical Babylon, by drying up the mystical Euphrates, are that king and army that are in this book of Revelation represented as at war with Antichrist. And what king and army that is, we may see in chap. xii. 7, and xix. 11, to the end: Michael the king of angels, and his angels; he whose name is called the word of God, and that has on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords; and the heavenly armies that follow him, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. Cyrus the chief of the kings of the east, that destroyed Babylon, and redeemed God's church from thence, and restored Jerusalem, seems in that particular affair very manifestly to be spoken of as a type of Christ; God calls him his shepherd, to perform his pleasure, to say to Jerusalem, thou shalt be built, and to the temple, thy foundation shall be laid, Isa. xliv. 28. God calls him his Messiah: chap. xlv. 1, "Thus saith the Lord to his anointed (in the original, to his Messiah), to Cyrus." He is spoken of as one that God had raised up in righteousness, that he might build his city, and freely redeem his captives, or let them go without price or reward, chapter

xlv. 13. He is said to be one whom God had loved, chap. xlviii. 14. In like manner as the Messiah is said to be God's elect, in whom his soul delighteth. As by Babylon, in the Revelation, is meant that Antichristian society that is typified by old Babylon; so by the kings of the east, that should destroy this Antichristian church, must be meant those enemies of it that were typified by Cyrus and other chieftains of the east, that destroyed old Babylon; viz., Christ, who was born, lived, died and rose in the east, together with those spiritual princes that follow him, the principalities and powers in heavenly places, and those ministers and saints that are kings and priests, and shall reign on earth; especially those leaders and heads of God's people, those Christian ministers and magistrates that shall be distinguished as public blessings to his church, and chief instruments of the overthrow of Antichrist.

As the river Euphrates served the city of Babylon as a supply, so, as it also was before observed, it served as an impediment or obstacle to hinder the access of its enemies: as there was a vast moat round the city, filled with the water of the river, which was left empty when Euphrates was dried up. And therefore we may suppose that another thing meant by the effect of the sixth vial, is the removal of those things which hitherto have been the chief obstacles in the way of the progress of the true religion, and the victory of the church of Christ over her enemies: which have been the corrupt doctrines and practices that have prevailed in Protestant countries, and the doubts and difficulties that attend many doctrines of the true religion, and the many divisions and contentions that subsist among Protestants. The removal of those would wonderfully prepare the way for Christ and his armies, to go forward and prevail against her enemies, in a glorious propagation of true religion. So that this vial which is to prepare the way for Christ and his people, seems to have respect to that remarkable preparing the way for Christ, by levelling mountains, exalting valleys, drying up rivers, and removing stumbling-blocks, which is often spoken of in the prophecies, as what shall next precede the church's latter day glory; as Isa. xlii. 13, &c., "The Lord shall go forth as a mighty man; he shall stir up jealousy as a man of war; he shall prevail against his enemies. I will make waste mountains and hills, and dry up all their herbs; and I will make the rivers islands, and I will dry up the pools; and I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not, and I will lead them in paths that they have not known; I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight: these things will I do unto them and not forsake them." Chap. xl. 3, 4, 5, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God: every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and rough places plain; and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together." Chap. xi. 15, 16, "And the Lord shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea, and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, and shall smite it in the seven streams thereof, and make men go over dry shod: and there shall be a highway for the remnant of his people which shall be left, from Assyria, like as it was to Israel, in the day that he came out of the land of Egypt." Chap. lvii. 14, "Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumbling-block out of the way of my people." And chap. lxii. 10, "Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the high-way; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people." Zech. x. 10, 11, 12, "I will bring them again also out of the land of Egypt, and gather them out of Assyria; and I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon; and place shall not be found for them. And he shall pass through the sea with

affliction, and shall smite the waves of the sea; and all the deeps of the river shall dry up: and the pride of Assyria shall be brought down, and the sceptre of Egypt shall depart away: and I will strengthen them in the Lord, and they shall walk up and down in his name, saith the Lord." And it is worthy to be remarked that as Cyrus's destroying Babylon, and letting go God's captives from thence, and restoring Jerusalem, is certainly typical of Christ's destroying mystical Babylon, and delivering his people from her tyranny, and gloriously building up the spiritual Jerusalem in the latter days; so God's preparing Cyrus's way, by drying up the river Euphrates, is spoken of in terms like those that are used in those prophecies that have been mentioned, to signify the preparing Christ's way, when he shall come to accomplish the latter event. Thus God says concerning Cyrus, Isa. xlv. 2, "I will go before thee, and make crooked places straight." And ver. 13, "I will direct, or make straight (as it is in the margin) all his ways." This is like chap. xl. 2, 4, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. The crooked things shall be made straight." Chap. xlii. 16, "I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight."

If any should object against understanding the river Euphrates in Rev. xvi. 12, as signifying what has been supposed, that when mention is made of the river Euphrates, in another place in this prophecy, it is manifestly not so to be understood, viz. in chapter ix. 14, "Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates;" and that there is no reason to understand the river Euphrates in the vision of the sixth vial, as signifying something diverse from what is meant by the same river in the vision of the sixth trumpet;

I answer, that there appears to me to be good reason for a diverse understanding of the river Euphrates in these two different places: the diversity of the scene of the vision, and of the kind of representation, in those two diverse parts of this prophecy, naturally leads to it and requires it. It is in this book as it is in the Old Testament; when the river Euphrates is spoken of in the Old Testament, both in the histories and prophecies, it is mentioned with regard to a twofold relation of that river; viz., 1st, with regard to its relation to Babylon. And as it was related to that, it was something belonging to that city, as its defence and supply, as has been represented. Thus the river Euphrates is spoken of in many places that have been already observed, and others that might be mentioned. 2dly. This river is spoken of with regard to its relation to the land of Israel, God's visible people. And as it was related to that, it was its eastern boundary. It is so spoken of Gen. xv. 18, Exod. xxiii. 31, Deut. i. 7, and xi. 24, Josh. i. 4, 2 Sam. viii. 3, 1 Chron. xviii. 3, 1 Kings iv. 21, Ezra iv. 20. Agreeable to this diverse respect or relation of this river, under which it is mentioned in the Old Testament, so must we understand it differently in different parts of the prophecy of this book of Revelation, according as the nature and subject of the vision requires. In the 16th chapter where the prophecy is about Babylon, and the vision is of God's plagues on Babylon, preparing the way for her destruction, there, when the river Euphrates is mentioned, we are naturally and necessarily led to consider it as something belonging to Babylon, appertaining to the mystical Babylon, as Euphrates did to old Babylon. But we cannot understand it so in the 9th chapter, for there the prophecy is not about Babylon. To mention Euphrates there, as something belonging to Babylon, would have been improper; for the nature of the vision, and prophetical representation, did not lead to it, nor allow it. John had had no vision of Babylon; that kind of representation had not been

made to him; there is not a word said about Babylon until we come to the second part of this prophecy, after John had the vision of the second book, and Christ had said to him, *Thou must prophecy again before peoples, and nations, and kings*, chap. xi. The scene of the vision, in the former part of the prophecy, had been more especially the land of Israel; and the vision is concerning two sorts of persons there, viz., those of the tribes of Israel that had the seal of God in their foreheads, and those wicked apostate Israelites that had not this mark. Compare chap. vii. 3—8, and chap. ix. 4. The vision in this 9th chapter is of God's judgments on those of the tribes of Israel, or in the land of Israel, which had not the seal of God in their foreheads. And therefore when mention is made, ver. 14, of a judgment coming on them from the river Euphrates, this river is here spoken of in the former respect, viz., with regard to its relation to the land of Israel, as its eastern border; and thereby we must understand that God would bring some terrible calamity on Christendom from its eastern border, as he did when the Turks were let loose on Christendom.

If these things that have been spoken of, are intended in the prophecy of the sixth vial, it affords, as I conceive, great reason to hope that the beginning of that glorious work of God's Spirit, which, in the progress and issue of it, will overthrow Antichrist, and introduce the glory of the latter days, is not very far off.

Mr. Lowman has, I think, put it beyond all reasonable doubt, that the fifth vial was poured out in the time of the reformation. It also appears satisfyingly, by his late exposition, that, take one vial with another, it has not been two hundred years from the beginning of one vial to the beginning of another, but about one hundred and eighty years. But it is now about two hundred and twenty years since the fifth vial began to be poured; and it is a long time since the main effects of it have been finished. And therefore if the sixth vial has not already begun to be poured out, it may well be speedily expected.

But with regard to the first thing that I have supposed to be signified by the effect of this vial, viz., the drying up the fountains and streams of the wealth and temporal incomes and supplies of the Antichristian church and territories, I would propose it to consideration, whether or no many things that have come to pass within these twenty years past, may not be looked upon as probable beginnings of a fulfilment of this prophecy. Particularly what the kings of Spain and Portugal did some years since, when displeased with the Pope, forbidding any thenceforward going to Rome for investitures, &c., thereby cutting off two great streams of the Pope's wealth, from so great and rich a part of the Popish world; and its becoming so frequent a thing of late for Popish princes, in their wars, to make bold with the treasure of the church, and to tax the clergy within their dominions, as well as laity; or, which is equivalent, to oblige them to contribute great sums, under the name of a free gift; and also the late peeling and impoverishing the Pope's temporal dominions in Italy, by the armies of the Austrians, Neapolitans and Spaniards, passing and repassing through them, and living so much at discretion in them, of which the Pope has so loudly complained, and in vain; receiving nothing but menaces, when he has objected against giving liberty for the like passage, for the future. These things make it hopeful that the time is coming when the princes of Europe, the ten horns, shall hate the whore, and make her desolate and naked, and eat her flesh, as Rev. xvii. 16; which will prepare the way for what next follows, her being burnt with fire; even as the sixth vial poured out, to consume the supplies of Antichrist, and strip him naked of his wealth, and as it were to pick his flesh off from his bones, will make way for what next follows, the seventh vial that will consume Antichrist by the fierceness of God's wrath.

Besides these things that have been already mentioned, are also worthy to be considered the things that have lately happened to dry up the fountains and streams of the wealth of the Antichristian dominions: as, the so far ruining the trade of France and Spain, that are the two chief Popish kingdoms, the main support of the Popish cause, and from whence the kingdom of Antichrist has had of late its main supplies. The almost miraculous taking of Cape Breton, in the year 1745, whereby was dried up one of the main sources of the wealth of the kingdom of France; and the no less, but yet more wonderful disappointment of the French, in their great attempt to repossess themselves of it, and the confounding of their great Armada, under the duke D'Anville, by a most visible hand of God against them, the last year; and in now again baffling a second attempt of our obstinate enemies, this year, by delivering up their men of war, with their warlike forces and stores, in their way to America, into the hands of the English Admirals Anson and Warren: the strange and unaccountable consuming of the great magazines of the French East India company, at Port L'Orient, with their magnificent buildings, the last year; and its so wonderfully coming to pass, that scarce any thing of the great stores there laid up, was saved out of the flames; the awful destruction by an earthquake, the last year, of that great and rich city of Lima, the centre of the South Sea trade, and the capital of Peru, the richest country in the world, from whence comes more of its silver and gold than any other country, from whence Spain is principally supplied with its wealth, and where the French had a great trade; the destruction of the city being attended with the destruction of all the ships in the harbor, which were dashed in pieces as it were in a moment, by the immediate hand of God; many of which were doubtless laden with vast treasures. I might have mentioned the taking of Porto Bello, not long before this, by a very small force, though a place of very great strength, where the Spanish galleons used principally to go, to carry the wealth of Peru to Spain. Besides the taking from the French and Spaniards so many of their ships, laden with vast riches, trading to the South Seas, the East and West Indies, and the Levant.

And here it is especially worthy of notice, that when the French seemed to have gotten so great an advantage of the English factory at Madras, they were so frustrated of the benefit and gains they expected by it, by the hand of heaven against them, immediately pursuing the conquerors with tempest, wrecking their ships laden with our spoils; and after that, delivering up into the hands of the English their East India fleet, with their stores and immense treasures, intended for the confirming to themselves the advantage they seemed to have gained by the forementioned conquest: at the same instant, also delivering into our hands their strong force intended for the regaining that great fountain of their wealth, which they had lost at Cape Breton. And since that, delivering into the hands of Sir Peter Warren so great a part of their vast and rich fleet from the West Indies.

And one thing with relation to the taking of Cape Breton, though it may seem trivial, yet I do not think to be altogether inconsiderable in the present case; and that is, that hereby the Antichristian dominions are deprived of a very great part of their fish, which makes no small part of the food and support of Popish countries; their superstition forbidding them to eat any flesh for near a third part of the year. This they were supplied with much more from Cape Breton, than any place in the world in the possession of Papists. And the contention of France with the Dutch, deprives them of most of their supply of this sort, which they had elsewhere. When the prophet Isaiah foretells the depriving Egypt of its wealth and temporal supplies, under the figure

of drying up their rivers, this is particularly mentioned, that they should be deprived of their fish. Isa. xix. 4, &c., "And the Egyptians will I give over into the hand of a cruel lord. And the waters shall fail from the sea, and the rivers shall be wasted and dried up; and they shall turn the rivers far away, and the brooks of defence shall be emptied and dried up. The fishers also shall mourn, and all they that cast angle into the brooks shall lament, and they that spread nets upon the waters shall languish." This is expressed in the prophecies of drying up the waters, i. e., the supplies, of Egypt; and this probably is implied in the prophecies of drying up the waters of that city that is spiritually called Egypt. And it may be noted, that this is not only a supply that the church of Antichrist has literally out of the waters, but is that part of their temporal supply which is eminently the supply and food of their Antichristian superstition, or which their Popish religion makes necessary for them.

These things duly considered, I imagine afford us ground to suppose, not only that the effect of this sixth vial is already begun, but that some progress is already made in it, and that this vial is now running apace. And when it shall be finished, there is all reason to suppose that the destruction of Antichrist will very speedily follow; and that the two last vials will succeed one another more closely than the other vials. When once the river Euphrates was dried up, and Cyrus's way was prepared, he delayed not, but immediately entered into the city to destroy it. Nor is it God's manner, when once his way is prepared, to delay to deliver his church and show mercy to Zion. When once impediments are removed, Christ will no longer remain at a distance, but will be like a roe or a young hart, coming swiftly to the help of his people. When that cry is made, Isa. lvii. 14, "Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way," &c., the high and lofty one that inhabits eternity, is represented as very near to revive the spirit of the contrite, and deliver his people with whom he had been wroth, ver. 15, to the end. When that cry is made Isa. xl., "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God; every valley shall be exalted," &c., God tells his church, *that her warfare is accomplished, and the time to comfort her is come, and that the glory of the Lord now shall be revealed, and all flesh see it together*, ver. 1—5. And agreeably to these things, Christ, on the pouring out the sixth vial, says, *Behold I come*, Rev. xvi. 15. The sixth vial is the forerunner of the seventh and last, to prepare its way. The angel that pours out this vial is the harbinger of Christ; and when the harbinger is come, the king is at hand. John the Baptist, that was Christ's harbinger, who came to level mountains and fill up valleys, proclaimed, *The kingdom of heaven is at hand; and when he had prepared Christ's way, then the Lord suddenly came into his temple, even the messenger of the covenant*, Mal. iii. 1.

It is true, that we do not know how long this vial may continue running, and so Christ's way preparing, before it is fully prepared: but yet if there be reason to think the effect of this vial is begun, or is near, then there is reason also to think that the beginning of that great work of God's Spirit, in reviving of religion, which before it is finished, will issue in Antichrist's ruin, is not far off. For it is pretty manifest, that the beginning of this work will acompany the sixth vial. For the gathering together of the armies on both sides, on the side of Christ and Antichrist, to that great battle that shall issue in the overthrow of the latter, will be under this vial (compare Rev. xvi. 12, 13, 14, with chapter xix. 11, to the end); and it is plain that Christ's manifesting himself, and wonderfully appearing after long hiding himself to plead his own and his people's cause, and riding forth against his enemies in a glorious manner, and his peo-

ple's following him in pure linen, or the practice of righteousness and pure religion, will be the thing that will give the alarm to Antichrist, and cause him to gather that vast host to make the utmost opposition. But this alarm and gathering together is represented as being under the sixth vial. So that it will be a great revival, and mighty progress of true religion under the sixth vial, eminently threatening the speedy and utter overthrow of Satan's kingdom on earth, that will so mightily rouse the old serpent, to exert himself with such exceeding violence, in that greatest conflict and struggle that ever he had with Christ and the church, since the world stood.

All the seven vials bring terrible judgments upon Antichrist; but there seems to be something distinguishing of the three last, the fifth, sixth and seventh, viz., that they more directly tend to the overthrow of his kingdom, and accordingly each of them is attended with a great revival of religion. The fifth vial was attended with such a revival, and reformation, that greatly weakened and diminished the throne or kingdom of the beast, and went far towards its ruin. It seems as though the sixth vial should be much more so; for it is the distinguishing note of this vial, that it is the preparatory vial, which more than any other vial prepares the way for Christ's coming to destroy the kingdom of Antichrist, and set up his own kingdom in the world. A great outpouring of the Spirit accompanied that dispensation that was preparatory to Christ's coming in his public ministry, in the days of his flesh: so, much more will a great outpouring of the Spirit accompany the dispensation that will be preparatory to Christ's coming in his kingdom.

And besides those things which belong to the preparation of Christ's way, which are so often represented by levelling mountains, drying up rivers, &c., viz., the unravelling intricacies, and removing difficulties attending Christian doctrines, the distinguishing between true religion and its false appearances, the detecting and exploding errors and corrupt principles, and the reforming the wicked lives of professors, which have been the chief stumbling-blocks and obstacles that have hitherto hindered the progress of true religion; I say, these things, which seem to belong to this preparatory vial, are the proper work of the Spirit of God, promoting and advancing divine light and true piety, and can be the effect of nothing else.

And that the beginning of that glorious work of God's Spirit, which shall finally bring on the church's latter day glory, will accompany that other effect of this vial, viz., the turning the streams of the wealth of the world, the bringing its treasures, and the gains of its trade and navigation, into the true Protestant church of Christ, seems very manifest, because this very effect is spoken of as that which shall be at the beginning of this glorious work: Isa. lx. 8, 9, "Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as doves to their windows? Surely the Isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish *first*, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and gold with them, unto the name of the Lord thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee." So that it is to be hoped that before this effect of this vial, which is now probably begun, is at an end, the Spirit of God will so influence the hearts of Protestants, that they will be disposed to devote to the service of God the silver and gold they take from their Popish enemies, and the gains of their trade and navigation, both to the East and West Indies, so that their merchandise and hire shall be holiness to the Lord.

Agreeably to what has been supposed, that an extraordinary outpouring of the Spirit of God is to accompany this sixth vial, so the beginning of a work of extraordinary awakening has already attended the probable beginning of

this vial; and has been continued in one place or other for many years past; although it has been, in some places, mingled with much enthusiasm, after the manner of things in their first beginnings, unripe, and mixed with much crudity. But it is to be hoped a far more pure, extensive and glorious revival of religion is not far off, which will more properly be the beginning of that work, which in its issue shall overthrow the kingdom of Antichrist, and of Satan through the world. But God will be inquired of for this, by the house of Israel, to do it for them.

Ans. 5. If notwithstanding all that I have said, it be still judged that there is sufficient reason to determine that the ruin of Antichrist is at a very great distance, and if all that I have said, as arguing that there is reason to hope that the beginning of that glorious revival of religion, which in its continuance and progress will destroy the kingdom of Antichrist is not very far off, be judged to be of no force; yet it will not follow that our complying with what is proposed to us in the late memorial from Scotland, will be in vain, or not followed with such spiritual blessings, as will richly recompense the pains of such extraordinary prayer for the Holy Spirit, and the revival of religion. If God does not grant that greatest of all effusions of his Spirit, so soon as we desire, yet we shall have the satisfaction of a consciousness of our having employed ourselves in a manner that is certainly agreeable to Christ's will and frequent commands, in being much in prayer for this mercy, and much more in it than has heretofore been common with Christians: and there will be all reason to hope, that we shall receive some blessed token of his acceptance. If the fall of mystical Babylon, and the work of God's Spirit that shall bring it to pass, be at several hundred years distance, yet it follows not that there will be no happy revivals of religion before that time, that shall be richly worth the most diligent, earnest and constant praying for.

I would say something to one Objection more, and then hasten to the conclusion of this discourse.

Object. VI. Some may be ready to object, that what is proposed in this memorial is a new thing, such as never was put in practice in the church of God before.

Ans. If there be something circumstantially new in it, this cannot be a sufficient objection. The duty of prayer is no new duty: for many of God's people expressly to agree, as touching something they shall ask in prayer, is no new thing: for God's people to agree on circumstances of time and place for united prayer, according to their own discretion, is no new thing: for many, in different places, to agree to offer up extraordinary prayers to God, at the same time, as a token of their union, is no new thing: but has been commonly practised in the appointment of days of fasting and prayer for special mercies. And if the people of God should engage in the duty of prayer, for the coming of Christ's kingdom, in a new manner in that respect, that they resolve they will not be so negligent of this duty, as has been common with professors of religion heretofore, but will be more frequent and fervent in it; this would be such a new thing as ought to be, and would be only to reform a former negligence. And for the people of God in various parts of the world, visibly, and by express agreement, to unite for this extraordinary prayer, is no more than their duty, and no more than what it is foretold the people of God should actually do, before the time comes of the church's promised glory on earth. And if this be a duty, then it is a duty to come into some method to render this practicable: but it is not practicable (as was shown before) but by this method, or some other equivalent.

THE CONCLUSION.

And now, upon the whole, I desire every serious Christian, that may read this discourse, calmly and deliberately to consider whether he can excuse himself from complying with what has been proposed to us and requested of us, by those ministers of Christ in Scotland, that are the authors of the late memorial. God has stirred up a part of his church, in a distant part of the world, to be in an extraordinary manner seeking and crying to him, that he would appear to favor Zion, as he has promised. And they are applying themselves to us, to join with them; and make that very proposal to us, that is spoken of in my text, and in like manner and circumstances. The members of one church, in one country, are coming to others, in other distant countries, saying, "Let us go speedily and constantly to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts." Will it not become us readily to say "I will go also?" What these servants of Christ ask of us, is not silver or gold, or any of our outward substance, or that we would put ourselves to any cost, or do any thing that will be likely to expose us to any remarkable trouble, difficulty or suffering in our outward interest; but only that we would help together with them, by our prayers to God, for the greatest mercy in the world; and that a mercy which as much concerns us as them; for the glory of their Lord and ours, for the great advancement of our common interest and happiness, and the happiness of our fellow creatures through all nations; a mercy, which, at this day especially, there is great need of; a mercy which we in this land do stand in particular need of; a mercy which the word of God requires us to make the subject matter of our prayers, above all other mercies, and gives us more encouragement to pray earnestly and unitedly to him for, than any other mercy; and a mercy, which the providence of God towards the world of mankind, at this day, does loudly call the people of God to pray for. I think, we cannot reasonably doubt but that these ministers have acted a part becoming disciples of the great Messiah, and ministers of his kingdom, and have done the will of God, according to his word, in setting forward such an affair at this day, and in proposing it to us. And therefore I desire it may be considered, whether we shall not really sin against God, in refusing to comply with their proposal and request, or in neglecting it, and turning it by, with but little notice and attention; therein disregarding that which is truly a call of God to us.

The ministers that make this proposal to us are no Separatists or schismatics, promoters of no public disorders, nor of any wildness or extravagance in matters of religion; but are quiet and peaceable members and ministers of the church of Scotland, that have lamented the late divisions and breaches of that church. If any shall say, that they are under no advantage to judge of their character, but must take it on trust from others, because they conceal their names; in answer to this, I would say, that I presume that no sober person will say that he has any reason to suspect them, to be any other than gentlemen of honest intention. Besure there is no appearance of any thing else, but an upright design in their proposal: and that they have not mentioned their names, is an argument of it. It may well be presumed, from the manner of their expressing themselves, in the memorial itself, that they concealed their names from that which perhaps may be called an excess of modesty; choosing to be at the greatest distance from appearing to set forth themselves to the view of

the world, as the heads of a great affair, and the first projectors and movers of something extraordinary, that they desire should become general, and that God's people in various distant parts of the world should agree in. And therefore, they are moreover careful to tell us, that they do not propose the affair, as now setting it on foot, but as a thing already set on foot; and do not tell us who first projected and moved it. The proposal is made to us in a very proper and prudent manner, with all appearance of Christian modesty and sincerity, and with a very prudent guard against any thing that looks like superstition, or whatsoever might entangle a tender conscience; and far from any appearance of a design to promote any particular party or denomination of Christians, in opposition to others; but with all appearance of the contrary, in their charitable request, that none would by any means conceive of any such thing to be in their view, and that all, of all denominations and opinions concerning the late religious commotions, would join with them, in seeking the common interest of the kingdom of Christ. And therefore I think, none can be in the way of their duty, in neglecting a proposal in itself excellent, and that which they have reason to think is made with upright intentions, merely because the proposers modestly conceal their names. I do not see how any serious person, that has an ill opinion of late religious stirs, can have any color of reason to refuse a compliance with this proposal, on that account; the more disorders, extravagancies and delusions of the devil have lately prevailed, the more need have we to pray earnestly to God, for his Holy Spirit to promote true religion, in opposition to the grand deceiver, and all his works; and the more such prayer as is proposed, is answered, the more effectually will all that is contrary to sober and pure religion, be extirpated and exploded.

One would think that every one that favors the dust of Zion, when he hears that God is stirring up a considerable number of his ministers and people, to unite in extraordinary prayer, for the revival of religion and advancement of his kingdom, should greatly rejoice on this occasion. If we lay to heart the present calamities of the church of Christ, and long for that blessed alteration that God has promised, one would think it should be natural to rejoice at the appearance of something in so dark a day, that is so promising a token. Would not our friends that were lately in captivity in Canada, that earnestly longed for deliverance, have rejoiced to have heard of any thing that seemed to forebode the approach of their redemption? And particularly may we not suppose that such of them as were religious persons, would greatly have rejoiced to have understood that there was stirred up in God's people an extraordinary spirit of prayer for their redemption? And I do not know why it would not be as natural for us to rejoice at the like hopeful token of the redemption of Zion, if we made her interest our own, and preferred Jerusalem above our chief joy.

If we are indeed called of God to comply with the proposal now made to us, then let me beseech all that do sincerely love the interest of real Christianity, notwithstanding any diversity of opinion, and former disputes, now to unite in this affair, with one heart and voice: and let us go speedily to pray before the Lord. There is no need that one should wait for another. If we can get others, that are our neighbors, to join with us, and so can conveniently spend the quarterly seasons with praying societies, this is desirable; but if not, why should we wholly neglect the duty proposed? Why should not we perform it by ourselves, uniting in heart and practice, as far as we are able, with those who, in distant places, are engaged in that duty at that time?

If it be agreeable to the mind and will of God, that we should comply with the memorial, by praying for the coming of Christ's kingdom, in the manner therein proposed, then doubtless it is the duty of all to comply with the memorial, in that respect also, viz., in endeavoring, as far as in us lies, to promote others' joining in such prayer, and to render this union and agreement as extensive as may be. Private Christians may have many advantages and opportunities for this; but especially ministers, inasmuch as they not only are by office overseers of whole congregations of God's people, and their guides in matters of religion, but ordinarily have a far more extensive acquaintance and influence abroad, than private Christians in common have.

And I hope that such as are convinced that it is their duty to comply with, and encourage this design, will remember that we ought not only to go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek this mercy, but also to go constantly. We should unite in our practice those two things, which our Saviour unites in his precept, *praying* and *not fainting*. If we should continue some years, and nothing remarkable in Providence should appear, as though God heard and answered, we should act very unbecoming believers, if we should therefore begin to be disheartened, and grow dull and slack, in our seeking of God so great a mercy. It is very apparent from the word of God, that God is wont often to try the faith and patience of his people, when crying to him for some great and important mercy, by withholding the mercy sought, for a season, and not only so, but at first to cause an increase of dark appearances; and yet, without fail, at last, to succeed those who continue instant in prayer with all perseverance, and will not let God go except he blesses. It is now proposed that this extraordinary united prayer should continue for seven years, from November 1746. Perhaps some that appear forward to engage, may begin to think the time long, before the seven years are out; and may account it a dull story, to go on, for so long a time, praying in this extraordinary method, while all yet continues dark and dead, without any dawnings of the wished for light, or new promising appearance in Providence of the near approach of the desired mercy. But let it be considered, whether it will not be a poor business, if our faith and patience is so short-winded, that we cannot be willing to wait upon God one seven years, in a way of taking this little pains, in seeking a mercy so infinitely vast. For my part, I sincerely wish and hope that there may not be an end of extraordinary united prayer, among God's people, for the effusions of the blessed Spirit, when the seven years are ended; but that it will be continued, either in this method, or some other, by a new agreement, that will be entered into, with greater engagedness, and more abundant alacrity, than this is; and that extraordinary united prayer for such a mercy will be further propagated and extended, than it can be expected to be in one seven years. But yet at the same time I hope God's people, that unite in this agreement, will see some tokens for good, before these seven years are out, that shall give them to see, that God has not said to the seed of Jacob, seek ye me in vain; and shall serve greatly to animate and encourage them to go on in united prayers for the advancement of Christ's kingdom, with increasing fervency. But whatever our hopes may be in this respect, we must be content to be ignorant of the times and seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power; and must be willing that God should answer prayer, and fulfil his own glorious promises, in his own time; remembering such instructions, counsels and promises of the word of God as these, Psal. xxvii. 14, "Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine

heart; wait, I say, on the Lord." Hab. ii. 3, 4, "For the vision is yet for an appointed time; but in the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry." Micah vii. 7, "I will look unto the Lord, I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me." Isa. xxv. 8, 9, "God will wipe away tears from off all faces, and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth; for the Lord hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God! We have waited for him, and he will save us: this is Jehovah! We have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation." AMEN.

CONCERNING THE

PERSEVERANCE OF SAINTS.

§ 1. THERE is just the same reason for those commands of earnest care and laborious endeavors for perseverance, and threatenings of defection that are in the word of God, notwithstanding its being certain that all that have true grace shall persevere, as there is for earnest endeavors after godliness, and to make our calling and election sure, notwithstanding all that are elected, shall undoubtedly be saved. For as the case with respect to this is the same, decree or no decree, it is so, that every one that believes shall be saved, and he that believes not shall be damned. They that will not live godly lives, do find out for themselves that they are not elected; they that will live godly lives, have found out for themselves that they are elected. So it is here: he that to his utmost endeavors to persevere in ways of obedience, finds out that his obedience and righteousness are true; and he that does not, discovers that his is false. In this respect, it is all one whether he that is once righteous must be always so or no. There is not at all the less diligence necessary for that, yea, necessary in order to salvation.

§ 2. As persons are commanded and counselled to repent and be converted, though it is already determined whether they shall be converted or no; after the same manner, and with the same propriety, persons are commanded and counselled to persevere, although by their being already converted, it is certain they shall persevere. By their resolutely and steadfastly persevering through all difficulties and opposition and trials, they obtain an evidence of the truth and soundness of their conversion; and by their unstableness and backsliding, they procure an evidence of their unsoundness and hypocrisy. And it always happens, that persons who have the most need of being cautioned and counselled against falling and apostasy, by reason of the weakness of their grace, have most need of an evidence of the truth of their grace. And those that have the least need of any evidence, by reason of the strength and lively exercise of grace, having least need of being warned against falling, they are least in danger of it. And so the same persons, when they are most in danger of falling, by reason of the languishing of their graces, their ill-temper and workings of corruption, have most need of evidence; and, when in least need of care and watchfulness not to fall, by reason of the strength and vigorous actings of grace, they have least need of evidence. So that there is as much need of persons exercising care and diligence to persevere in order to their salvation, as there is of their attention and care to repent and be converted. For our own care and diligence is as much the proper and decreed means of perseverance, as of any thing else; and the want of perseverance, is as much an evidence of the want of true conversion, as the want of conversion is a sign of the want of election. And labor and diligence to persevere, is as rational a way to make sure of the truth of grace, as they are to make sure of the truth of election. God's wrath and future punishment are proposed to all sorts of *men*, as motives to a universal

and constant obedience, not only to the wicked, but also to the godly. Indeed those that have obtained full assurance of their safe estate, are not capable of this motive, and they have no need of it. But when persons are most capable of the fear of hell, by reason of their want of assurance, and their uncertainty whether or no they are not exposed to damnation by reason of the weakness of their grace, then they have most need of it.

Coroll.—Here we may observe, that it is not the Scripture way of judging of the truth of grace, to be determined principally by the method and steps of the first work, but by the exercise and fruits of grace in a holy life.

§ 3. *Perseverance* in faith is, in one sense, the condition of justification, that is, the promise of acceptance is made only to a persevering sort of faith, and the proper evidence of its being of that sort is actual perseverance. Not but that a man may have good evidences that his faith is of that sort, before he has finished a perseverance, yea, the first time that he exercises such a faith, if the exercises of it are lively and vigorous. But when the believer has those vigorous exercises of faith, by which he has clear evidences of its being of a persevering kind, he evermore feels most of a disposition and resolution to persevere, and most of a spirit of dependence upon God and Christ to enable him so to do.

§ 4. As to passages of Scripture like that, Ezekiel xviii. 24, wherein are declared the fatal consequences of turning or falling away from righteousness, they do not at all argue but that there is an essential difference, in the very nature of the righteousness of those that persevere, and the righteousness of those that fall away. The one is of a lasting sort, the other not; and so, falling away or holding out, are in those places respected as natural fruits or discoveries of the nature of the righteous or of the wicked. If a man that had a prospect of being erelong in calamitous circumstances, of being poor, and the object of general contempt, and should make this declaration concerning his friend, or him that now appeared to be such, that if his friend would cleave to him through all his circumstances, he would receive him and treat him ever after as his true friend, but otherwise he would utterly desert him as a false friend; this would not argue, that he thought there was no difference between the love of friendship that was persevering, and that that fails when it is tried: but only, that those difficulties discover the difference, and show whose love is of a lasting sort, and whose not. The promises in Scripture are commonly made to the signs of grace; though God knows whether men be sincere or not, without the signs whereby men know it.

§ 5. The following are some reasons why grace to persevere is promised in the covenant of grace. 1. God when he had done such great things to redeem men, and had not spared his own Son, had so completely provided for men's redemption in the dignity of the person of the Redeemer, and the greatness of the things that he did and suffered to magnify his grace towards poor fallen man: I say, God, when he had thus laid out himself to glorify his mercy and grace in the redemption of poor fallen men, did not see meet, that those that are redeemed by Christ, should be redeemed so imperfectly, as still to have the work of perseverance left in their own hands, which they had been found already insufficient for even in their perfect state, and are now less sufficient for than they were before, and ten times more liable than formerly to fall away and not to persevere, if, in their fallen, broken state, with their imperfect sanctification, the care of the matter be trusted with them. Man, though redeemed by Christ, so as to have the Holy Spirit of God, and spiritual life, again restored in a degree, yet is left a very poor, piteous creature, because all is suspended on his perse-

verance as it was at first; and the care of that affair is left with him as it was then; and he is ten times more likely to fall away than he was then, if we consider only what he has in himself to preserve him from it. The poor creature sees his own insufficiency to stand from what has happened in time past; his own instability has been his undoing already; and now he is vastly more unstable than before. Though he be redeemed to spiritual life, yet he has no remedy provided against that which has once proved his ruin, and is so much more likely to be so again. The more considerate and wise he is, the more will he be sensible of his own insufficiency, and how little his own strength is to be depended on, and how much he needs God's help in this matter. Yet he has nothing to trust to but his own strength. He wants some person that is to be depended on, to fly to for help; but there is none provided. God in his providence made void the first covenant, to make way for a better covenant, one that was better for man. It was the will of God, that it should first appear by the event, wherein the first was deficient, or wanting what man needed, which was manifest in the fall. Therein it appeared, that the great thing wherein the first covenant was deficient, was, that the fulfilment of the righteousness of the covenant, and man's perseverance, was intrusted with man himself, with nothing better to secure it than his own strength. And therefore, God introduces a better covenant, which should be an everlasting covenant, a new and living way; wherein that which was wanting in the first covenant should be supplied, and a remedy should be provided against that, which under the first covenant proved man's undoing, viz., man's own weakness and instability; by a Mediator's being given, who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; who cannot fail; who should undertake for his people; who should take the care of them; who is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God through him; and who ever lives to make intercession for them. God did not see it fit that man should be trusted to stand in his own strength a second time. God at first entered into such a covenant with man, wherein he was left to stand in his own strength, to the end that the event might show the weakness and instability of man, and his dependence on God. But when the event has once proved this, there is no need of entering into another covenant of the same tenor, to manifest it. It is not fit in a covenant, that is distinguished from the first covenant as a covenant of grace, wherein all is of mere, free, and absolute grace, that the reward of life should be suspended on the perseverance of man, as dependent on the strength and steadfastness of his own will. It is a covenant of works, and not a covenant of grace, that suspends eternal life on what is the fruit of a man's own strength. Eternal life was to have been of works in those two respects, viz., as it was to have been for man's own righteousness, and as it was suspended on the fruit of his own strength. For, though our first parent depended on the grace of God, the influences of his Spirit in his heart; yet that grace was given him already, and dwelt in him constantly, and without interruption, in such a degree as to hold him above any lust or sinful habit or principle. Eternal life was not merely suspended on that grace that was given him and dwelt in him, but on his improvement of that grace which he already had. For, in order to his perseverance, there was nothing further promised beyond his own strength; no extraordinary occasional assistance was promised. It was not promised but that man should be left to himself as he was (though God did not oblige himself not to afford extraordinary assistance on occasion, as doubtless he did to the angels who stood). But the new covenant is of grace, in a manner distinguishing from the old, in both these respects, that the reward of life is suspended neither on his own strength nor worthiness. It pro-

vides something above either. But if eternal life under the new covenant was suspended on man's own perseverance, or his perseveringly using diligent endeavors to stand without the promise of any thing farther to ascertain it than his own strength, it would herein be farther from being worthy to be called a covenant of grace than the first covenant; because man's strength is exceedingly less than it was then, and he is under far less advantages to persevere; perseverance is much more difficult. And if he should obtain eternal life by perseverance in his own strength now, eternal life would, with respect to that, be much more of himself than it would have been by the first covenant; because perseverance now would be a much greater thing than under those circumstances; and he has but an exceeding small part of that grace dwelling in him, to assist him, that he had then; and that which he has, does not dwell in him in the exercise of it by such a constant law as grace did then, but is put into exercise by the Spirit of grace, in a far more arbitrary and sovereign way.

2. Again, Christ came into the world to do what mere man failed of. He came as a better surety, and that in him those defects might be supplied that proved to be in our first surety, and that we might have a remedy for that mischief that came by those defects. But the defect of our first surety was, that he did not persevere. He wanted steadfastness; and therefore God sent us, in the next surety, one that could not fail, that should surely persevere. But this is no supply of that defect to us, if the reward of life be still suspended on perseverance, which has nothing greater to secure it still, than the strength of mere man; and the perseverance of our second surety is no remedy against the like mischief, which came by failure of our first surety; but, on the contrary, we are much more exposed to the mischief than before. The perseverance on which life was suspended, depended then indeed on the strength of mere man; but now it is suspended on the strength of fallen man.

In that our first surety did not persevere, we fell in and with him; for doubtless, if he had stood, we should have stood with him. And therefore when God in mercy has given us a better surety to supply the defects of the first, a surety that might stand and persevere, and one that has actually persevered through the greatest imaginable trials; doubtless we shall stand and persevere in him. After all this, eternal life will not be suspended on our perseverance by our own poor, feeble, broken strength. Our first surety, if he had stood, would have been brought to eat of the tree of life, as a seal of a confirmed state of life in persevering and everlasting holiness and happiness; and he would have ate of this tree of life as a seal of persevering confirmed life, not only for himself, but as our head. As when he ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, he tasted as our head, and so brought death on himself and all his posterity; so, if he had persevered, and had ate of the tree of life, he would have tasted of that as our head, and therein life and confirmed holiness would have been sealed to him and all his posterity. But Christ, the second Adam, acts the same part for us that the first Adam was to have done, but failed. He has fulfilled the law, and has been admitted to the seals of confirmed and everlasting life. God, as a testimony and seal of his acceptance of what he had done as the condition of life, raised him from the dead, and exalted him with his own right hand, received him up into glory, and gave all things into his hands. Thus the second Adam has persevered, not only for himself, but for us; and has been sealed to confirmed and persevering and eternal life, as our head; so that all those that are his, and that are his spiritual posterity, are sealed in him to persevering life. Here it will be in vain to object, that persons persevering in faith and holiness is the condition of their being admitted to the state of Christ's posterity, or to a right

in him; and that none are admitted as such till they have first persevered. For this is as much as to say, that Christ has no church in this world; and that there are none on this side the grave, that are admitted as his children or people; because they have not yet actually persevered to the end of life, which is the condition of their being admitted as his children and people; which is contrary to the whole Scripture.

Christ being the second Adam, and having finished the work of Adam for us, does more than merely to redeem or bring us back to the probationary state of Adam, while he had yet his work to finish, knowing his eternal life uncertain, because suspended on his uncertain perseverance. That alone is inconsistent with Christ's being a second Adam, and having undertaken and finished the work of Adam for us. For if Christ, succeeding in Adam's room, has done and gone through the work that Adam was to have done, and did this as our representative or surety, he has not only thereby set us, that are in him and represented by him, in Adam's probationary, uncertain state, having the finishing or persevering in the work on which eternal life was suspended yet before him and uncertain, or in the state that Adam was in on this side a state of confirmed life; but besides, if Christ has finished the work of Adam for us, as representing us, and acting in our stead, then doubtless he has not only gone through himself, but has carried us, who are in him, and are represented by him, through the work of Adam, or through Adam's working probationary state, unto that confirmed state that Adam should have arrived at, if he had gone through his own work.

3. That the saints shall surely persevere, will necessarily follow from this, that they have already performed the obedience which is the righteousness by which they have justification unto life; or it is already performed for them, and imputed to them: for that supposes, that it is the same thing in the sight of God as if they had performed it. Now, when the creature has once actually performed and finished the righteousness of the law, he is immediately sealed and confirmed to eternal life. There is nothing to keep him off from the tree of life, to seal him to it any longer. But as soon as ever a believer has Christ's righteousness imputed to him, he has virtually finished the righteousness of the law.

It is evident the saints shall persevere, because they are already justified. Adam would not have been justified till he had fulfilled and done his work. If he had stood, he would not have been tried or judged in order to his justification till then, and then his justification would have been a confirmation. It would have been an approving of him as having done his work, and as standing entitled to his reward. A servant that is sent out about a piece of work, is not justified by his master till he has done; and then the master views the work, and seeing it to be done according to his order, he then approves and justifies him as having done his work, and being now entitled to the promised reward; and his title to his reward is no longer suspended on any thing remaining. So, Christ having done our work for us, we are justified as soon as ever we believe in him, as being, through what he has accomplished and finished, now already actually entitled to the reward of life. And justification carries in it not only remission of sins, but also a being adjudged to life, or accepted as entitled by righteousness to the reward of life; as is evident, because believers are justified by communion with Christ in his justification, which he received when he was raised from the dead. But that justification of Christ which he was then the subject of, did most certainly imply both these things, viz., his being now judged free of that guilt which he had taken upon him, and also his having now fulfilled all righteousness, his having perfectly obeyed the Father, and done enough to

entitle him to the reward of life as our head and surety; and therefore he then had eternal life given him as our head. That life which begun when he was raised from the dead, was eternal life. Christ was then justified in the same sense that Adam would have been justified, if he had finished his course of perfect obedience; and therefore implies in it confirmation in a title to life, as that would have done; and thus, all those that are risen with Christ, and have him for their surety, and so are justified in his justification, are certainly in like manner confirmed. And again, that a believer's justification implies not only a deliverance from the wrath of God, but a title to glory, is evident by Rom. v. 12, where the apostle mentions both these as joint benefits implied in justification: "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. By whom also we have access into this grace wherein we stand, *and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*" So, remission of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified, are mentioned together as what are jointly obtained by faith in Christ: Acts xxvi. 18, "That they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified, through faith that is in me." Both these are undoubtedly implied in that passing from death unto life, which Christ speaks of as the fruit of faith, and which he opposes to condemnation: John v. 24, "Verily I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life."

To suppose that a right to life is suspended on our own perseverance, which is uncertain, and has nothing more sure and steadfast to secure it than our own good wills and resolutions (which way soever we suppose it to be dependent on the strength of our resolutions and wills, either with the assistance, or in the improvement of assistance, or in seeking assistance), is exceedingly dissonant to the nature and design of the gospel scheme. For, if it were so, it would unavoidably have one of these two effects; either, 1, Exceedingly to deprive the believer of the comfort, hope and joy of salvation; which would be very contrary to God's intention in the scheme of man's salvation, which is to lay a foundation for man's abundant consolation every way, and to make the ground of our peace and joy in all respects strong and sure: or else, 2, He must depend much on himself, and the ground of his joy and hope must in a great measure be his own strength, and the steadfastness of his own heart, the unchangeableness of his own resolutions, &c.; which would be very different from the gospel scheme.

§ 6. It is one act of faith to commit the soul to Christ's keeping in this sense, viz., to keep it from falling. The believing soul is convinced of its own weakness and helplessness, its inability to resist its enemies, its insufficiency to keep itself, and so commits itself to Christ, that he would be its keeper. The apostle speaks of his committing his soul by faith to Christ, under great sufferings and trials of his perseverance: 2 Tim. i. 12, "For which cause also I suffer these things. Nevertheless, I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day." And we are commanded to commit our way and our works unto the Lord, Psalm xxxvii. 5, and Prov. xvi. 3. Faith depends on Christ for all good that we need, and especially good of this kind, which is of such absolute necessity in order to the salvation of our souls. The sum of the good that faith looks for, is the Holy Spirit. It looks for spiritual and eternal life; for perfect holiness in heaven, and persevering holiness here. For the just shall live by faith.

§ 7. It seems to be because continuance in faith is necessary to continuance

in justification, at least in part, that the apostle expresses himself as he does: Rom. i. 17, "For therein the righteousness of God is revealed from faith unto faith; as it is written, the just shall live by faith." Or, the righteousness of God is revealed, as we receive it and have the benefit of it, from faith, or by faith unto faith. For it is by faith that we first perceive and know this righteousness, and do at first receive and embrace it, and do at first become interested in it: and being once interested in it, we have the continuance of faith in the future persevering exercises of it made sure to us, which is necessary, in order to a suitable continuance of a justified state. And faith continuing, our interest in God's righteousness continues, and we are continued in a justified state, and shall certainly have the future and eternal reward of righteousness. And thus that is fulfilled, "The just shall live by faith." Agreeable to that, 1 Pet. i. 5, "We are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." And also to that, Heb. x. 35—39, "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry. Now, the just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul." And chap. iii. 6, 14, 18, 19; and iv. 1, 11; Heb. vi. 4, 11, 12; and the former part of the 15th chapter of John, "Abide in me, and I in you.—If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch.—Continue ye in my love.—If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." It was impossible that Christ should not continue in his Father's love. He was entitled to such help and support from him, as should be effectual to uphold him in obedience to his Father. And yet it was true, that, if Christ had not kept his Father's commandments, he could not have continued in his love. He would have been cast out of favor. See Rom. xi. 22; Col. i. 21, 22, 23; 1 Tim. ii. 15; 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8; Rom. iv. 3; compared with Gen. xv. 6; 1 John ii. 24, 25, 26, 27, 28.

§ 8. Perseverance is acknowledged by Calvinian divines, to be necessary to salvation. Yet it seems to me, that the manner in which it is necessary has not been sufficiently set forth. It is owned to be necessary as a *sine qua non:* and also is expressed by this, that though it is not that by which we first come to have a title to eternal life, yet it is necessary in order to the actual possession of it, as the way to it; that it is as impossible we should come to it without perseverance, as it is impossible for a man to go to a city or town, without travelling throughout the road that leads to it. But we are really saved by perseverance; so that salvation has a dependence on perseverance, as that which influences in the affair, so as to render it congruous that we should be saved. Faith is the great condition of salvation: it is that *by* which we are justified and saved, as it is what renders it congruous that we should be looked upon as having a title to salvation. But in this faith on which salvation thus depends, the perseverance that belongs to it is one thing that is really a fundamental ground of the congruity that faith gives to salvation. Faith is that which renders it congruous that we should be accepted to a title to salvation: and it is so on the account of certain properties in, or certain things that belong to it: and this is one of them, viz., its perseverance. Without this, it would not be fit that a sinner should be accepted to salvation. Perseverance indeed comes into consideration, even in the justification of a sinner, as one thing on which the fitness of acceptance to life depends. For, though a sinner is justified in his

first act of faith; yet even then, in that act of justification, God has respect to perseverance as being virtually in the first act. And it is looked upon as if it were a property of that faith by which the sinner is then justified. God has respect to continuance in faith; and the sinner is justified by that, as though it already were; because by divine establishment it shall follow; and so it is accepted, as if it were a property contained in the faith that is then seen. Without this, it would not be congruous that a sinner should be justified at his first believing; but it would be needful that the act of justification should be suspended till the sinner had persevered in faith. For a like reason that it is necessary there should be one act of faith in order to its being congruous that a person should be saved, it is also necessary that there should be perseverance in faith. Faith gives a title to salvation, as it gives a union to Christ, or is in its nature an actual unition of the soul to Christ. But there is the same reason why it is necessary that the union between Christ and the soul should remain in order to salvation, as that it should once be, or that it should be begun; for it is begun, to the end that it might remain. And if it could be begun without remaining, the beginning would be in vain. The soul is saved no otherwise than by union with Christ, and so is fitly looked upon as his. It is saved *in him;* and in order to that, it is necessary that the soul now be in him, even when salvation is actually bestowed, and not merely that it should once have been in him. In order to its being now saved, it must now be one of Christ's; and in order to being fitly or congruously looked on as now one of Christ's, it is necessary it should now be united, and not solely that it should be remembered that it was once united to Christ. And there is the same reason why believing, or the quality wherein the unition consists, should remain, in order to the union's remaining; or why the unition should once be, in order to the union's once being. The first act of faith gives a title to salvation, because it does virtually trust in God and Christ for perseverance, among other benefits, and gives a title to this benefit with others, and so virtually contains perseverance: otherwise it would not be congruous that the sinner should be justified in the first act of faith; and therefore God, in justifying a sinner, even in the first act of faith, has respect to the congruity between justification and perseverance of faith. So that perseverance is necessary to salvation, not only as a *sine qua non*, or as the way to possession; but it is necessary even to the congruity of justification, and that not the less, because a sinner is justified in his first act of believing, or because perseverance is promised when once there has been one act of faith; for God, in justifying a sinner, or at least all which in justification respects a future reward has respect to his own promise, and to the fitness of a qualification beheld as yet only in his own promise. That perseverance is thus necessary to salvation, not only as a *sine qua non*, but by reason of such an influence and dependence, seems manifest from Scripture; as particularly, Heb. x. 38, 39, "Now the just shall live by faith. But if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe unto the saving of the soul." Rom. xi. 20, "Well, because of unbelief they were broken off. But thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear." John xv. 7, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." Heb. iii. 14, "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end." Chap. v. 12, "Be ye followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

So that not only the first act of faith, but subsequent acts of faith, and perseverance in faith, do justify the sinner; and that, although salvation is in it-

self sure and certain after the first act. For the way in which the first act of faith justifies, is not by making the futurition of salvation certain in itself; for that is as certain in itself by the divine decree, before the first act of faith, as afterwards. But it is only in these two ways that any act of ours can connect salvation with the subject; 1, as it may give a congruity; and 2, as it gives such a divine manifestation of the futurition of salvation to us, that we can lay hold of and depend on the divine truth and faithfulness, that we shall have salvation. Salvation is in some sense the sinner's right, before he believes. It was given him in Christ, before the world was. But before a sinner believes, he is not actually possessed of that which gives the congruity, nor has he any thing from God that he can lay hold of, so as to either challenge it, or on good grounds hope for it. He cannot be said to have any right, because he has no congruity; and as to the promise made to Christ, he has no hold of that, because that is not revealed to him. If God had declared and promised to the angels that such a man should be saved; that would not give him any right of his own, or any ground of challenge. A promise is a manifestation of a person's design of doing some good to another, to the end that he may depend on it, and rest in it. The certainty in him arises from the manifestation; and the obligation in justice to him arises from the manifestation's being made to him, to the effect that he might depend on it. And therefore subsequent acts of faith may be said to give a sinner a title to salvation, as well as the first. For, from what has been said, it appears that the congruity arises from them, as well as the first; they in like manner containing the nature of unition to Christ as mediator; and they may have as great, nay, a greater hand in the manifestation of the futurition of salvation to us for our dependence, than the first act. For our knowledge of this may proceed mainly from after acts, and from a course of acts. This is all that is peculiar to the first act, that so far as the act is plain, it gives us evidence from God, for our dependence; both for continued acts of faith, and also the salvation that is connected with them. So that, so far as this act is plain to us, we can challenge both these as our right. The Scripture speaks of after acts of faith in both Abraham and Noah, as giving a title to the righteousness which is the matter of justification. See Rom. iv. 3, Heb. xi. 7.

§ 9. The doctrine of perseverance is manifest from the nature of the mediation of Christ. For as Christ is a mediator between God and man, to reconcile God to man, and man to God, and as he is a middle person between both, and has the nature of both, so he undertakes for each, and, in some respect, becomes a surety for each with the other. He undertakes and becomes a surety for man to God. He engages for him, that the law, that was given him, shall be answered; and that justice, with respect to him, shall be satisfied, and the honor of God's majesty vindicated. So he undertakes and engages for the Father with man, in order to their being reconciled to God, and induced to come to him, to love him, and trust confidently in him, and rest quietly in him. He undertakes for the Father's acceptance and favor, John xiv. 21, "He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father." He undertakes that the Father shall hear and answer their prayers. He becomes surety to see that their prayers are answered: John xiv. 13, "Whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." He undertakes that they shall have all necessary supplies of grace from the Father; and he engages for the continuance of God's presence with them, and the continuance of his favor, and of the supplies of grace necessary to uphold and preserve them, and keep them from finally perishing: John xiv. 16, "And I will pray

the Father, and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you for ever." And v. 23, "If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our abode with him." Christ does not only declare that God will give us needed grace, but he himself undertakes to see it done. He promises that he will bestow it from the Father: John xv. 26, "But when the comforter is come, whom I will send you from the Father." It was necessary that some one should thus undertake for God with man, for the continuance of his pardoning and sanctifying grace, in order to the sinner's being fully reconciled to God, and brought fully and quietly to rest in him as his God: otherwise the sinner, conscious of his own weakness and sinfulness, could have no quiet rest in God, for fear of the union's being broken between God and him, and for fear of incurring God's displeasure and wrath, and so having God an enemy for ever; which man in himself, in his fallen state, is a thousand times as liable to, as he was under the first covenant. He is in a capacity to undertake for us, and be surety for us, with the Father, because he puts himself in our stead. He also is in a capacity to undertake for the Father, and be surety for him with us, because the Father hath put him in his stead. He puts himself in our stead as priest, and answers for us, and does and suffers in that office what we should have done and suffered; and God puts him in his stead as king. He is appointed to the government of the world, as God's vicegerent, and so, in that office, answers for God to us, and does, and orders and bestows, that which we need from God. He undertakes for us in things that are expected of us as subjects, because he puts himself into our subjection. He appears in the form of a servant for us. So he undertakes for the Father, in that which is desired and hoped for of him as king: for the Father hath put him into his kingdom and dominion, and has committed all authority and power unto him. He is in a capacity to undertake for the Father with us, because he can say, as in John xvi. 15, "All things that the Father hath are mine."

§ 10. The first covenant failed of bringing man to the glory of God, through man's instability, whereby he failed of perseverance. Man's changeableness was the thing wherein it was weak. It was weak through the flesh. But God had made a second covenant in mercy to fallen man, that in the way of this covenant he might be brought to the glory of God, which he failed of under the other. But it is God's manner, in things that he appoints and constitutes, when one thing fails of its proper end, he appoints another to succeed in the room of it; to introduce that the second time, in which the weaknesses and defects of the former are supplied, and which never shall fail, but shall surely reach its end, and so shall remain as that which needs no other to succeed it. So God removed the first dispensation by Moses, Heb. viii. 7—13: "For if the first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah, not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers—because they continued not in my covenant; and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts, and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, &c.—for I will be merciful to their unrighteousnesses, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. In that he saith, a new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old, is ready to vanish away." So

the priesthood of the order of Aaron ceases, because of the weakness and insufficiency of it to answer the ends of priesthood, which are, to reconcile God to man. Therefore God introduces another priesthood, of the order of Melchisedec, that is sufficient, and cannot fail, and remains for ever: Heb. vii. 11, 12, "If, therefore, perfection were by the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should arise, after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law." Ver. 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, "After the similitude of Melchisedec, there ariseth another priest, who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec. For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before, for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For the law made nothing perfect; but the bringing in of a better hope did."—What the law failed of, being weak through the flesh, Christ performed: Rom. viii. 3, 4, "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, that walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." So the old heavens and earth are destroyed, because of their defects, and a new heaven and earth introduced, that are to remain for ever. Heb. xii. 26, 27, 28, "But now hath he promised, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, *yet once more*, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of those things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore we, receiving a kingdom which cannot be removed," &c.—So Moses, the first leader of Israel, failed of bringing them into Canaan; but Joshua, the second leader, did not fail. The kingdom of Saul, the first anointed of the Lord, did not continue; but the kingdom of the second anointed remains for ever. The first sanctuary, that was built in Israel, was a movable tabernacle, and therefore ready to vanish away, or be removed finally:—and God forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh. But the second sanctuary was a firm building, an immovable temple, which was typically an everlasting sanctuary, and that which God would never forsake, 2 Sam. vii. 10, 11. So the first covenant that God made with Adam, failed, because it was weak through the flesh, or through the weakness of human nature, to whose strength and stability the keeping was intrusted. Therefore God introduces another better covenant, committed not to his strength, but to the strength of one that was mighty and stable, and therefore is a sure and everlasting covenant. God intrusted the affair of man's happiness on a weak foundation at first to show man that that foundation was weak, and not to be trusted to, that he might trust in God alone. The first was only to make way for the second. God lighted up divine light in man's soul at the first; but it remained on such a foundation, that Satan found means to extinguish it; and therefore, when God lights it up a second time, it is, that it may never be extinguished.

§ 11. Some things may yet remain, that are properly the conditions of salvation; on which salvation may be so suspended, that it may well excite to the utmost caution, lest we should come short of eternal life, and should perish for the want of them, after it is already become impossible that we should fail of salvation. For the condition on which the man Christ Jesus was to obtain eternal life, was his doing the work which God had given him to do; his performing perfect persevering obedience, and his therein conquering Satan and

the world, and all opposition, and enduring all sufferings that he met with.—Therefore Christ used the utmost diligence to do this work, and used the utmost caution lest he should fail of it; and prayed with strong crying and tears, and wrestled with God in a bloody sweat, that he might not fail, but might have God's help to go through, so that he might not fail. Yet it was impossible he should fail of eternal life, and the whole reward that had been promised him. The joy that was set before him, was not only certain to him, but he had a proper title to it as God's heir, by reason of his relation to God the Father, as being his only begotten Son. It was impossible that he should fail in the work to which he was appointed, as God had promised him sufficient and effectual grace and help to persevere, and already had made known his election: Psal. cx. 7, "He shall drink of the brook in the way, therefore shall he lift up the head." Isaiah xlii. 1, "Behold my Servant, whom I uphold; mine Elect, in whom my soul delighteth. I have put my Spirit upon him. He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles." Verse 4, "He shall not fail nor be discouraged." And verse 6, "I the Lord have called thee in righteousness: I will hold thine hand and keep thee." Isaiah xli. 8, "But thou Israel my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend." Verse 10, "Fear thou not, for I am with thee. Be not dismayed, for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." So it was in effect promised in the revelations that were made to Mary and Joseph, Zechariah, &c., and so to himself in answer to his prayers, by a voice from heaven, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." And so probably by Moses and Elias in the Mount, and by the voice from heaven there, and by the angel strengthening him in answer to his prayer in his agony. It appears that all was certain beforehand, by God's actually saving great numbers beforehand, on the ground of his future perseverance in his work.

§ 12. Grace is that which God implants in the heart against great opposition of enemies, great opposition from the corruption of the heart, and from Satan and the world. Great are the efforts of all these against the implantation of it, and they all labor to the utmost to keep it out. Seeing therefore that God manifests his all-conquering power in giving grace a place in the heart in spite of those enemies, he will doubtless maintain it there against their united efforts to root it out. He that has so gloriously conquered them in bringing in grace, will not at last suffer himself to be conquered, by their expelling that which he has so brought in by his mighty power. He that gloriously subdued those enemies under his feet, by bringing this image of his into the soul, will not suffer this image of his finally to be trampled under their feet. God alone could introduce it. It was what he undertook; and it was wholly his work, and doubtless he will maintain it. He will not forsake the work of his own hands. Where he has begun a good work, he will carry it on to the day of Christ. Grace shall endure all things, and shall remain under all things; as the expression *παντα υπομενει* literally signifies, in 1 Cor. xiii. 7.

§ 13. The Spirit of God was given at first, but was lost. God gives it a second time, never to be utterly lost. The Spirit is given in another manner than he was then. Then indeed he was communicated, and dwelt in their hearts. But this communication was made without conveying at the same time any proper right or sure title to it. But when God communicates it the second time, as he does to a true convert, he withal gives it to him to be his own; he finally makes it over to him in a sure covenant. He is their purchased and promised possession. If our first parents had had a right to the Holy Spirit made over to them at first, he never would have departed from them.

Man, in his first estate, had no benefit at all properly made over to him; for God makes over benefits only by covenant: and then the condition of the covenant had not been fulfilled. But now, man, at his first conversion, is justified and adopted; he is received as a child and an heir, as a joint heir with Christ. His fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. God is theirs, and Christ is theirs; and the Holy Ghost is theirs: and all things are theirs. The Holy Spirit, who is the sum of all good, is their inheritance; and that little of it that they have in this life, is the earnest of their future inheritance, till the redemption of the purchased possession.

Heaven is theirs: their conversation is there. They are citizens of that city, and of the household of God. Christians are represented as being come already to heaven, to Mount Zion, the city of the living God; to an innumerable company of angels, &c.—Heaven is the proper country of the church. They are raised up together with Christ, and made to sit together in heavenly places: Eph. ii. 6, "They are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places." The whole tenor of the gospel shows, that Christians have actually a full and final right made over to them, to spiritual and heavenly blessings.

§ 14. That the saints should be earnestly exhorted and pressed to care and caution, and earnest endeavors to persevere, is most reasonable; and it cannot be otherwise, notwithstanding their having an absolute, unchangeable promise, that they shall persevere. For still perseverance is their duty, and what they are to do in obedience to God. For that is the notion of perseverance, their holding out in the way of God's commandments. But if it were absurd to command them to persevere, as the work they have to do, then how would they do it in obedience to him? The angels in heaven are confirmed, and it is promised unto them that they never shall sin: yet it is proper for God to give them commands, though in so doing he requires the improvement of their care and endeavors to obey and fulfil his will exactly. It is not obedience, if they do not take care and endeavor to obey. If they should cease to take care, that very thing would prove their fall. So, in this case, if Christians cease to take care to persevere, that very thing is falling away.

§ 15. It shows the infallible perseverance of true Christians, that the spiritual life that they have, is as partaking with Christ in his resurrection life, or the life that he has received as risen from the dead, and not as partaking of that life which he lived before his death. For they live by Christ's living in them: Gal. ii. 20, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me:" that is, by the life that he has received since his resurrection, and by his communicating to them that fulness which he received when he rose from the dead. When he rose, he received the promise of the Father, the Spirit of life without measure, and he sheds it forth on believers: the oil poured on the risen head goes down to the skirts of the garments; and thus Christ lives in believers by his Spirit's dwelling in them. Believers, in their conversion, are said to be risen with Christ: Col. ii. 12, 13, "Ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him." And chap. iii. 1, "If ye then be risen with Christ," &c. And Eph. ii. 5, 6, "Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together." Rom. v. 10, "For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." Phil. iii. 10, 11, "That I may know him, and the power

of his resurrection." Rom. vi. 4, 5, "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism unto death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life;"—and so on throughout that chapter. This spiritual resurrection and life is procured and purchased for Christ's members, by Christ's suffering obedience, in the same manner as his own resurrection and life is purchased by it. And they receive life as united to him, as members of a rising Saviour, and as being married in their conversion to him; as in the beginning of the 7th chapter of Romans, which is a continuation of that forecited discourse in the 6th chapter. That justification which believers have at their conversion, is as partaking of the justification that Christ had in his resurrection; and so all the benefits that believers have, their comfort and hope and joy here, and their eternal life hereafter, are as partaking with a risen Saviour. We are begotten again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible. See Eph. i. 18, 19, 20, 21: "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints; and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ Jesus, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in heavenly places."

Hence it follows, that the saints shall surely persevere in their spiritual life and their justified state. The apostle hence argues, in the 6th of Romans, that believers are finally freed from sin, and shall live forever with Christ, and that sin shall no more have dominion over them: ver. 9, "Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him." Compared with ver. 5, 6, 7, 10, 14. Christ's resurrection life is an immortal, unfailing life. Rev. i. 18, "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore." Hence the benefits that believers receive, in being connected and risen with Christ, are sure and unfailing mercies: Acts xiii. 34, "And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David." This is the living bread, and hence he that eats thereof shall not die, but shall live forever: John vi. 50, 51. The saints cannot die, for their life is hid with Christ in God, who is risen and ascended, and is with God in glory in immortal life, Col. iii. 4.

§ 16. The perseverance of faith is necessary to a congruity to salvation. For it is implied in several places of Scripture, that if true believers should fail in persevering in faith, they would fail of a title to salvation, or of a state of salvation, and would be in a lost state: John xviii. 8, 9, "Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he. If, therefore, ye seek me, let these go their way: that the saying might be fulfilled which he spake, "Of them which thou gavest me, have I lost none:" i. e., Christ took care that they might go away, that they might not be in the way of such temptations as would be in danger of overthrowing them, so that they should not persevere. And it is implied, that if they were overthrown, and should not persevere, Christ would have lost them; the saving relation that they stood in to Christ would have been dissolved. The same seems fully implied in Christ's prayer in the 17th chapter of John. Thus, he makes use not only of their having received God's word, and believed that God had sent him, but their having kept his word, as a good plea for their title to that favor and acceptance of the Father, which he asks of the Father for them; as ver. 6, 7, 8, &c.—The same is implied in the 11th verse: "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me,

that they may be one, as we are." This implies, that their being one, or their standing in a saving relation to him, and in union with his mystical body, depends on the perseverance of their faith, even that union on which a title to all spiritual and saving benefits depends, which is more fully spoken of in the 21st and following verses. This perseverance of believers seems to be the benefit, which is the principal subject of this whole prayer. And in Luke xxii. 31, 32, it is implied, that if Peter's faith had failed, Satan would have had him: "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." 1 Pet. i. 5, "Who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation." Where it seems implied, that if they were not kept through faith, or if their faith did not persevere, they never would come to salvation. So, believers being overthrown in their faith, or their not knowing Christ's voice and following him, is called a being plucked out of Christ's hand; and it is implied, that the consequence would be their perishing. It also seems to be implied, that their possession of eternal life by Christ's gift, depends on their perseverance: John x. 27, 28, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I will give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." And in the 15th chapter of John, believers persevering in faith in Christ, or their abiding in him, is spoken of as necessary to the continuance of the saving union and relation that is between Christ and believers, and Christ's abiding in them; as ver. 4, 5, "Abide in me, and I in you.—I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." And in the 6th verse, it is spoken of as the necessary consequence of their not abiding in Christ, if that were possible; that the union should be utterly broken between Christ and them, and that damnation should be the consequence: "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered, and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." And in the 7th verse, this perseverance of faith is spoken of as the necessary means of the success of faith as expressed in prayer, which is faith's voice, necessary to obtain those good things which faith and prayer seek: "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." And in the 9th and 10th verses, it is implied, that Christ's acceptance of us, and favor to us as his, depends on our perseverance: "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you. Continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." So, the same perseverance is spoken of as necessary to our continuing in the favor and grace of God. "Now, when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God." And so it is spoken of as necessary to continuing in the goodness of God; and a being cut off, is spoken of as a certain consequence of the contrary. Rom. xi. 22, "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but towards thee goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise, thou also shalt be cut off." That expression, of standing fast *in the Lord*, 1 Thess. iii. 8, and Phil. iv. 1, implies that perseverance is necessary to a continuing in Christ, or in a saving relation to him; and more plainly still in 1 John ii. 24, "Let that therefore abide in you which you have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son and in the Father." See 1 Cor. xv. 2, and 2 Tim. iv 7, 8, and Heb. xii. 28. See also Jer. iii. 19.

§ 17. Christ in the 5th of Matthew, 33d verse, commands those who have already some faith, to seek the righteousness of God, which the apostle distinguishes from our own righteousness; yea, the words imply, he directs us to seek the righteousness of God, by which we may obtain the kingdom of God: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness." Compare this with verse 30, where those that he then especially directs himself to in this counsel, are spoken of as having already some faith. See also Matt. v. 1, and xiii. 14, 15, 16.

§ 18. Concerning the objection from Ezekiel: God's saying in Ezekiel xviii. 24, "If the righteous shall fall from his righteousness and commit iniquity, all his righteousness shall not be remembered; but in the iniquity which he hath done shall he die," and the like; do not at all prove, that it is supposed to be possible that a truly righteous man should fall from his righteousness; any more than God's saying, Levit. xviii. 4, 5, "Ye shall do my judgments and keep mine ordinances, to walk therein: I am the Lord your God: ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them." And the same, verses 13 and 21. And to the same purpose, chapter xviii. verse 22, the next verse but one before that from whence the observation is taken, "In his righteousness that he hath done, shall he live." These two assertions are again joined together in Ezek. xxxiii. 18, 19. I say, what is said in the forementioned places, no more proves it to be possible for a truly righteous man to fall from righteousness, so as to die in his iniquity, than these places prove that it is possible for a man to do these things required in God's statutes and judgments, so as to live in them, by the express sentence of the apostle, when speaking of those very passages of the Old Testament, Rom. x. 5: "For Moses described the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which doeth those things, shall live by them." Gal. iii. 12, "And the law is not of faith: but, the man that doeth them, shall live in them." The truth concerning both these assertions of the Old Testament, seems to be, that they are proposed to us as signifying and containing diverse varieties, and for a diverse use in application to ourselves.

1. For wise ends they are proposed to us as supposing something that is (though not in itself yet) in the present state of things impossible, to declare the certain connection of the impossible things, supposed with something else. So that all that is taught, is the certain connection between the antecedent and consequent; but it is not taught, that the antecedent shall ever be, or that it ever can be. So the Scripture, in saying he that doeth these things shall live in them, does not design to teach us, that in the present state of things, it is possible for us to do these things in a legal sense (in which sense the words are certainly proposed, as the apostle teaches); but only teaches the certain connection there is between doing these things and living in them, for wise ends; particularly to lead us, by such a legal proposal, to see our utter inability to obtain life by our own doings. So the law is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. Especially was it proper that these things should both be proposed; the one to be earnestly sought, though impossible to be obtained; and the other to be carefully avoided. though impossible to be fallen into, under the Old Testament, when the impossibility of either the one or the other was not so clearly and fully revealed, as now under the gospel. So also the Scripture, in saying if the righteous shall fall away from his righteousness, he shall die; does not teach us, that in the present state of things, since the fall, it is possible for a truly righteous man to fall from his righteousness; but only teaches us the certain connection between the antecedent and the consequent, for wise ends; and particularly, that those that think themselves righteous,

may beware of falling from righteousness. For it is not unreasonable to suppose that God should put us on bewaring of those things that are already impossible, any more than that he should direct us to seek and pray for those things that are promised and certain.

2. In another way both these things are proposed more evangelically, as having respect to that doing of those things, and that falling from righteousness, that are possible; viz., doing those things in an evangelical and believing obedience, which in strictness is not a proper doing of them; and a falling from a visible and external, material righteousness or godliness, which is not in strictness a proper godliness. Concerning the former of these, viz., doing these things, it is certain both senses are to be taken into view; the legal one, as is evident by the apostle; and the evangelical possible one, must also be understood, as is plain from the context of those places of the Old Testament. And that we should so understand the latter, is equally free of difficulty and objection.

§ 19. With respect to those texts in Ezekiel, that speak of a righteous man's falling away from his righteousness, the doctrine of perseverance was not so fully revealed under that dispensation. It was of service to the godly to make them wary; but especially to those who were legally righteous, and trusted in their own righteousness, as Ezekiel's hearers did; to convince them of this, that there was a connection between the antecedent, falling away, and the consequent, the dying in their iniquity. Gal. i. 8, "If an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." Which does not suppose it possible for an angel to preach another gospel, or for him to be accursed: the chapter speaks only of God's proceeding with men as a Judge, which is according to a man's works, or the evidences of his heart in his life; which is evident by the 30th verse of the 18th chapter of Ezekiel: "Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord God." When it is said, "If the righteous turn away from his righteousness," &c., it is not supposed, but that if they are righteous with a perfect heart, or with a new heart and new spirit, they would not turn away from their righteousness; for this is often spoken of by the prophet as an effectual remedy against falling away from righteousness. Jer. xxxii. 39, 40, "And I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them; and I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." And it is so spoken of once and again by this very prophet, chap. xi. 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, and chap. xxxvi. 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29. Yea, in this very chapter, after he had been declaring the danger of falling away from righteousness, the children of Israel seem to be exhorted to this very thing as a remedy against falling away: verse. 31, "Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed, and make you a new heart and a new spirit; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" They needed not only to turn from their transgressions, but to cast them away utterly, to have finally done with them, and to make them a new heart; for the prophet declares, that their old heart was a backsliding heart, bent to backslide, as the prophet often complains.

The new heart and new spirit is the same that is sometimes called a right spirit; as is evident by Psal. li. 10: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." But a right spirit is a steadfast spirit, as opposite to the spirit of backsliders. And this is evident by Psal. lxviii. 8, "A generation that set not their heart *aright*, and whose spirit was not steadfast with

God;" together with verse 37, "For their heart was not *right* with him, neither were they steadfast in his covenant." Want of perseverance is spoken of as an evidence of a hypocritical profession, Psal. cxix. 118.

It is true, that the phrase a *righteous man*, in Scripture, properly denotes a godly man; as do also the words *saints*, and *disciples* or *brethren*, in the New Testament. Yet it may be given to some that are not truly godly; because others that are visibly godly, while they continue to do the matter of their duty, thereby obtain the denomination of righteous men, or saints or godly, and are to be so called and treated by men, and are so treated in many respects by God, who doth take them and deal with them as such, till they prove treacherous to him, and till their unsoundness appears by their backsliding; as Christ treated Judas for a long time as a disciple, though he knew him even then to be a devil. God deals with men in these matters, in some respects after the manner of men. He acts as though he took them for saints, and treats them in many respects as such; as though he trusted to the appearance they make, till their behavior manifests them to others, or at least to their own consciences, to be otherwise; and then God appears, and acts and manifests himself as though he were disappointed. It is because God is pleased to treat mankind, not merely according to his own secret knowledge, but in his judicial proceedings with them he treats them so, that his justice may be most manifest to their own consciences, and to the world. Hence, in the last judgment, he will proceed by evidence, and will judge men by their works.

The godly themselves were really exposed to die in their iniquity, i. e., they were liable to be destroyed by God's awful judgments in this world, which the prophet has a special respect to, having an eye to those destroying judgments that God had lately brought on the nation of the Jews, which are very much the subject of the prophecy, and seem to have given occasion for it, and which the Jews had respect to in the proverb which they used, and which gave occasion to what is said in this chapter. If the sinner turned from his outward wickedness, unto an outward righteousness only, he would save his soul alive with regard to those outward calamities; and if the righteous fall away outwardly by committing some grievous sin, and getting into a bad way, they exposed themselves to die by this their iniquity in this manner.

This might be of use to deter the godly from falling into sin, lest they should expose themselves to be destroyed; for though the prophet has not respect solely to such destruction, yet it is most evident he has respect to it, and was doubtless understood to have respect to it by his hearers. The righteous might outwardly fall away for a time, and God might destroy him with an outward destruction for it.

A man that is materially righteous, may totally and utterly fall away; and if he doth so, he shall die eternally. And a man that is truly and sincerely righteous, may, as to the matter of his righteousness, for a time fall away, and so be exposed outwardly and temporally to die.

§ 20. If the doctrine of falling from grace be embraced, it would have a great tendency to prevent an act of faith; for if so, a person, if he should venture his soul on Christ, could not be assured that Christ would save him.

§ 21. That there is a real difference between them that fall away, and them that persevere, even before they fall away, is evident by the things that are given as a reason of their falling away: because they have no root in themselves; because they have not counted the cost, and because they have no oil in their vessels. Those that have no root, differ from those that have root, before there be the effect of their having no root; and so those that have no oil, &c. And

it appears again, by what is said, John ii. 23, that "when Christ was at Jerusalem at the passover, on the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man." And so by that, "They went out from us, because they were not of us. If they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us."

§ 22. *Objection.* But it is in the same chapter said, "That if a wicked man turn from his wickedness, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall live;" where doubtless must be understood by "doing that which is lawful and right," sincere and gracious righteousness, because there is a promise of life. And we must doubtless understand doing that which is lawful and right here, in the same sense as before. *Answer.* We may understand it in the same sense, for an external, visible, material righteousness. When it is said, if he turn from his iniquity and do that which is lawful and right, it must be understood, if he continue so to do, and do not turn from it again. According to the schemes of both Arminians and Calvinists, this must be understood. Whereby the objection is overthrown.

Visible Christians are in Scripture called saints, or holy; which is equivalent to the calling them righteous. The Jews are called a holy nation; the land is a land of uprightness; when only visibility is intended.

By righteous, sometimes is meant only innocent, or materially righteous in some particular. "Wilt thou also destroy a righteous nation?" Gen. xx. 4, Exod. xxiii. 7. "The innocent and the righteous, slay thou not;" Deut. xxv. 1. "Ye shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked;" 1 Sam. iv. 11. "How much more, when wicked men have slain a righteous person?" 2 Kings x. 9. By the righteous man that the prophet Ezekiel speaks of, he certainly does not speak in so limited a sense as to mean those that are of perfect and upright hearts, but so as to include those of an unsound heart, that trust in their own righteousness to commit iniquity; see Ezek. xxxiii. 13; i. e., those whose motive is only self-love, and their own safety, and so trust that they have righteousness enough to render them safe, though they do commit sin.

Those that are only restrained from committing sin by fear, and are ready to embrace, and are glad of opportunities of committing sin with impunity; these cannot be such as the sincerely righteous are often described to be, viz., such as love God with all their hearts and souls; that love the way of his commandments; that choose the way of his commands, &c.

The reason why some do not persevere, is, that there is not now a right heart in them; as is evident by Deut. v. 29: "O that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear me and keep my commandments!" &c.

When it is said, "If a righteous man turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, his righteousness shall not be remembered, but he shall die in his iniquity;" we need not, according to the Scripture manner of expression, understand any thing, but his seeming righteousness, or the righteousness that he seemeth to have. Christ often has in his mouth such an aphorism as this, "Whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath;" which he applies to that apparent godliness, grace, or piety, which natural men have, as is evident by the contexts, and the occasions of his using this aphorism; as Matt. xiii. 12, and Matt. xxv. 29, and Mark iv. 25, Luke xix. 26. This, in another place, is explained thus, "Whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to

have," Luke viii. 18. A being a righteous man, does not commonly signify to be one that is truly and sincerely godly. And so is believing in Christ mentioned frequently as the distinguishing character of one that is truly Christ's disciple. Yet we read of some that are said to believe, that, even at that very time, are spoken of as wanting something necessary to make them true disciples: John ii. 23, 24, 25, "Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself to them, because he knew all men; and needed not that any should testify of men, for he knew what was in man." These words intimate, that though they believed, yet Christ knew that they had not that in them then, that was to be depended on for perseverance: which implies, that if they were true believers, of a right principle, their perseverance might be depended on. And we are elsewhere told, why some that believe, endure but for a while, and do not persevere, viz., because they have no root in themselves. So that all those that do not persevere, never were Christ's disciples indeed. John viii. 31, "Then said Jesus to those Jews that believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." So that they never are Christ's disciples indeed, that do not continue in his word; which is agreeable to what the apostle John says, "They went out from us, because they were not of us. If they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us."

§ 23. That there is an essential difference between the faith and seeming grace of such professors as fall away, and such as persevere, even before any distinction appears as to perseverance, or while both retain their religion, is exceedingly manifest by John vi. 64, 65, "But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father." And verse 70, "And Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" Here, before Judas had fallen away, he is said not to believe, and to be a devil. Now Judas was a professing disciple and a distinguished one. He was a visible believer. Christ speaks of him as one that had forsaken all and followed him in the regeneration, as is evident in Matt. xix. 27, 28; and as one that had continued with Christ in his temptations, Luke xxii. 28, compared with verse 30. There were great appearances of true grace in him, as there were in Ahitophel, his type, with whom David took sweet counsel, &c. And therefore, as a righteous man, Christ had given him the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, and sent him forth to preach the gospel, and heal the sick, and cast out devils.—Yet he, even before he fell away, is said not to believe, but to be then a devil; which is agreeable to what the apostle says of apostates, "They went out from us, because they were not of us. If they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us."

§ 24. That they that once truly believe in Christ, never fall away finally and perish, is evident, because they that now believe not, and are in a state of condemnation, are spoken of as those that never have believed: John iii. 18, "Because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." Which supposes, that none of those that have believed, are now unbelievers, or are now in a state of condemnation. So again, those that shall be condemned at the day of judgment, are represented as those, not only that Christ then will know not, but as those that he never knew, Matt. vii. 23. But how can this be a true representation, if some of them were once true Christians, and so were known and owned by Christ, but only have since apostatized?

§ 25. "It seems manifest by the Scriptures, in the instances of the greatest falls and defections of true saints, that in the time of their fall true grace did not utterly cease in them. 'Though the good man fall, as he may seven times, yet he riseth up again;' Prov. xxiv. 19. 'He shall not be utterly cast down; for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand,' Psal. xxxiii. 24. Thus he upheld the Psalmist in a sore temptation, which had almost overset him; Psal. lxxiii. 23. Thus David, in praying God, after his notorious fall, not to take his Holy Spirit from him, virtually owned, that he never had totally departed from him; Psal. li. 11. Thus Peter had security given him by the prayer of his Lord and Master, that his faith should not fail; Luke xxii. 32. Thus when Solomon committed iniquity, God, as still his Father, would chasten him with the rod of men, but never suffer his mercy to depart away from him; 2 Sam. vii. 14, 15. And the same gracious provision is promised, in like case, to all the spiritual seed of Christ; Psal. lxxxix. 30—35. And hence so many promises of God's healing his people's backslidings." *Mr. John Hubbard*, in Berry-street Sermons, ser. 24.

§ 26. "The same reasons hold for the perseverance of all, as of any, who have obtained precious faith and sanctification; and yet doubtless many of them actually endure to the end, and are saved. Were it indeed left to believers to preserve themselves (in which case only it can be imagined how the final issue should be different in one another), the consequence may well be presumed fatal to them all. But the Scripture fixes it not here, but in the power of God; 1 Pet. i. 5, Jude 24,—on their relation to him, and on his special knowledge, love and care, of them; 2 Tim. ii. 19; Rom. viii. 31—39; chap. xi. 1, 2. And has not God the same love and care for all his children alike? Has he not the same power to keep one, as much as another? And is it not our heavenly Father's will, that not one even of the little ones in his family should perish? Matt. xviii. 14. It is also in Jesus Christ that they are preserved, who are effectually called; Jude 1. And has he not the same affection and regard for them all, as the dear members of his body, the travail of his soul, and the promised reward of his pouring it out unto death, which he was so to see as to be satisfied? Isa. liii. 10. And would he be satisfied with less than his full reward? Has he not also received them for his charge, with acknowledged instructions, that of all which the Father hath given him he should lose nothing? John vi. 39. And is he not then concerned in honor and faithfulness to employ that full power, which he likewise owns to be given him for that end, in order actually to give eternal life to them all? John xvii. 2. Of which power being really and successfully so exercised his intercession is a proof. For as this is the way in which his mediatorial power becomes effectual; so it is made in common for such as truly believe on him, that they may have his Spirit to abide in them for ever, and be preserved safe to glory; John xiv. 16; chap. xvii.—What stronger security for all his sheep being preserved to eternal life, can words contain, than those which he utters of them, "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand?" John x. 28. Here the end is ascertained so absolutely and universally, as to admit of no exceptions, no, not that of the sheep's wresting themselves, through their own perverseness and wandering disposition, out of his hands. The prevention of this belongs to the pastoral care. It must be also implied in Christ's guarding his sheep against the assaults of others; since there is indeed little or no danger of any thing separating them from him without their own consent." *Ibid.*

§ 27. "Let us not, however, through a vain and fond expectation of per-

severance, as a promised privilege, disregard all the commands and exhortations to it, as a duty incumbent on us, with the awful threatenings to those who draw back. The true use of these, far from overthrowing the abundant evidence we have for the doctrine, is this, they serve as a proper means, in a way suitable to our rational nature, for God to fulfil his own purpose and promise." *Mr. John Hubbard*, in the Berry-street Sermons, ser. 24.

§ 28. As to that text, Heb. x. 29: "Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing; and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" "There is a sanctification to the purifying of the flesh, and a sanctification to the purifying of the conscience from dead works, to serve the living God; Heb. ix. 13, 14. The sanctification external to the purifying of the flesh, consisteth in the man's separation from the world, and dedication unto God's service, by calling and covenant, common to all the members of the visible church; and it is forcible thus far, as to bring a man into credit and estimation as a saint before men, and unto the common privileges of the church; whereupon as men, so God also, speaketh unto him, and of him, as one of his people, and dealeth with him, in his external dispensation, as with one of his own people. In this sense, all the congregation of Israel, and every one of them, is called holy. Yea, *Core* also, and his followers, Num. xvi. 3. The sanctification internal, by renovation, consisteth in a man's separation from the state of nature to the state of grace; from his old conditions to be a new creature indeed. By this latter sort, a reprobate cannot be called sanctified, and that by virtue of the blood of the covenant, albeit he should not get any farther good thereby. Or we may say more shortly, there is a sanctification by consecration, when any thing is devoted or dedicated unto God, and a sanctification by inhabitation of the Holy Spirit; 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18. Of the former sort, the censers of Corah, Dathan, and Abiram, are called holy; and the reason is given, because they offered them before the Lord, therefore—they were hallowed; Num. xvi. 38. And in this sense, all the members of the visible church, even such as afterwards do prove apostates, are sanctified; because they offered, and offer themselves, unto the Lord. That this is the true sense, is confirmed by its being called the blood of the covenant; referring to the manner of sanctifying the people of old by the blood of the covenant; sealing them as a people externally in covenant with God, as the blood of Christ in baptism in like manner seals visible Christians, as externally God's covenant people.—*Mr. Dickson, cited by Blake on the Covenant*, p. 242.

§ 29. "When St. Paul kept under his body lest he should be a castaway, 1 Cor. ix. 27, he did no otherwise than he was wont to do in temporal concerns, in cases wherein he was beforehand certain of the event. So he sent word to the chief captain of the Jews lying in wait to kill him, lest he should be murdered by them, though it was revealed to him from God, but the very night before, that he should live to see Rome; Acts xxiii. 12—21. So he would not allow the sailors to leave the ship," &c. *Bellamy's True Religion, Disc.* I. *Inference* 9.

§ 30. 1 John iii. 6, "Whoever sinneth, hath not seen him, neither known him." This could not be true, if it might be so that a man that has truly seen him, and known him, might finally fall away to sin.

§ 31. Objection, from Scripture *cautions* against falling away, lest it should issue in damnation.

God had been pleased to connect eternal life with eating the fruit of the tree of life; and therefore, although it was utterly impossible that Adam should have eternal life in himself, after he had fallen, as God's peremptory declara-

tion and unalterable constitution had made it impossible; yet we are told, that after the fall, God placed cherubims and a flaming sword to keep the way of the tree of life, lest the man should put forth his hand, and take and eat of the fruit of the tree, and live forever. So God has connected damnation with living in allowed sin, and being overcome by sin, and brought under its power. And therefore, although it be impossible that men, after they are once truly converted, should ever perish, yet they are warned against falling away and yielding to the power of sin, lest they should perish; and the Apostle Paul kept under his body, lest he should be a castaway.

§ 32. As to the objections from such hypothetical propositions as those, Heb. x. 27, &c., "If we sin wilfully, after we have received the knowledge of the truth;" Heb. vi. 4, &c., "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, if they fall away," &c. Such hypothetical propositions may be true, when one or both parts of it are impossible, as the truth of such a proposition consists in the connection of the antecedent and consequent; as when our Lord said to the Jews, "If I should say, I know him not, I should be a liar like unto you." See *Gill* against *Whitby*, Vol. I. page 271.

§ 33. Objection. That we are required to take CARE and to PRAY that we may persevere. It was impossible for Christ to fail under his *trials;* and yet how evident is it that he used means, endeavors, care, labor, and earnest prayers, that he might persevere?

§ 34. Inquiry. Whether an absolute promise of perseverance does consist with counsels and exhortations to *endeavor*, and *care* to persevere.

In answer to this, I would lay down the following positions.

Position I. Things that it is proper for us to seek by earnest and importunate prayer, it is proper for us to use means and *labor and care for*. The reason is plain: prayer is one kind of seeking the thing; it is using means, and one way of laboring for it, taking care to obtain it, and pursuing after it.

There are many instances of prayer, and commands to pray for things promised. Christ on earth prayed for things promised; and he continually intercedes in heaven for things promised.

Position II. That which it is proper persons should use endeavors, means, and care for, they are properly *exhorted* to use means and endeavors for.

Position III. That which is proper for another to use means, labors and care for, that he may obtain it, though he knows it is certainly promised, it is proper that we should use means, &c., to obtain for ourselves, though it is promised.

But Christ used means, endeavors, labor, &c., for the salvation of sincerely good men, though it be promised.

§ 35. That Christian precept, which forbids anxiety in Christians, is a demonstration of the doctrine of perseverance: "Be careful for nothing, but in every thing, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your request be made known to God."

§ 36. When Satan earnestly strove again to enslave and destroy the Jews, after their return from their captivity, it was given as a reason why he should be disappointed and the people surely preserved, that they were as a brand plucked out of the fire, Zech. iii. 1, 2; so they that are redeemed by Christ from bondage and captivity to sin and Satan, are as brands plucked out of the fire, in a far more eminent manner. Because Christ has not only completed an atonement for sin, but also, a righteousness for us as our surety, and is openly justified and confirmed by God the Father, the Judge of all; therefore the apostle expresses himself as he does, Heb. xiii. 20, "Now the God of peace,

that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work, to do his will, working in you that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ."

§ 37. Christ labored, fought, took care, denied himself, and suffered for the salvation of sincerely good men; which yet had been before abundantly promised to him, and promised to men in the Old Testament; and Christ himself had promised it. The Scripture represents, that Christ ran a race to win a prize, and endured the cross for the joy that was set before him.

§ 38. That a truly good man will not backslide, is evident from Prov. xiv. 14: "The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own way; and a good man shall be satisfied from himself." Here is a plain opposition, both in the subject and predicate of this proposition; which plainly shows it to be incompatible to a good man, that he should be a backslider.

§ 39. The doctrine of perseverance was in no measure so clearly revealed under the Old Testament; and therefore it was much more proper for God to insist on the evils of apostasy, if it should be, as in Ezekiel. God treated men then according to the revelation he gave them, and the dispensation they were under; as he more frequently exhibited the terms of the covenant of works, saying, "He that doeth them shall live in them:" but not because any could obtain life in this way; nor does his so saying suppose it possible. No more does the threatening denounced to the apostasy of the righteous, any more suppose the thing threatened possible, than this promise supposes the thing to which the promise is made to be possible. God's threatening something on such a condition, does no more imply the condition possible, than his promising something on such a condition, supposes the condition possible. The apostle threatened those that were about to flee out of the ship, that if they fled out, they should not be saved; and yet it had been revealed to him, that they should all be saved.

§ 40. If it were left to the freedom of men's own will, whether men should persevere, in the sense that the Arminians suppose; i. e., to a will not determined by God, but self-determined, then it would be absurd to pray to God that we may persevere; that he would keep us from falling, and that he would uphold our goings in his paths, &c.

§ 41. If grace implanted in the heart be not an infallible sign that a man shall have eternal life, how is the Spirit of God an earnest of glory, when a man may have the Spirit, and yet have no assurance, that he shall be glorified? For every one who has the grace of God implanted in his heart, has the Holy Spirit of God, in his sanctifying influences.

REASONS AGAINST DR. WATTS'S NOTION

OF THE

PRE-EXISTENCE OF CHRIST'S HUMAN SOUL.

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1. God's manner with all creatures, is, to appoint them a trial, before he admits them to glory and confirmed happiness. Especially may this be expected before such honor and glory as the creating of the world, and other things which Dr. Watts ascribes to Christ's human soul.

2. If the pre-existing soul of Christ created the world, then, doubtless, he upholds and governs it. The same Son of God that did one, does the other. He created all things, and by him all things consist. And if so, how was his dominion confined to the Jewish nation, before his incarnation, but extends to all nations since? Besides, there are many things ascribed in the Old Testament to the Son of God, in those very places, which Dr. Watts himself supposes to speak of him, that imply his government of the whole world, and all nations. The same person that is spoken of as King of Israel, is represented as the Governor of the world.

3. According to this scheme, the greatest of the works of the Son in his created nature, implying the greatest exaltation, was his first work of all; viz., his creating all things, all worlds, all things visible and invisible, whether they may be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: and this before ever he had any trial at all of his obedience, &c. At least, this work seems much greater than judging the world at the Last Day; which the Scripture often speaks of as one of the highest parts of his exaltation, which he has in reward for his obedience and sufferings: and Dr. Watts himself supposes his honors, since his humiliation, to be much greater than before.

4. The Scripture represents the visible dominion of Christ over the world as a complex Person; or his sitting at the right hand of God the Father, and governing the world as the Father's vicegerent, as a new thing, after his ascension. But by Dr. Watts's scheme, it cannot be so.

5. Satan or Lucifer, before his fall, was the Morning Star, the Covering Cherub, the highest and brightest of all creatures.

6. On this scheme, it will follow, that the covenant of redemption was made with a person that was not *sui juris*, and not at liberty to act his own mere good pleasure, with respect to undertaking to die for sinners; but was obliged to comply, on the first intimation that it would be well-pleasing to God, and a thing that he chose.

7. According to that scheme, the man Christ Jesus was not properly the son of the Virgin, and so the son of man. To be the son of a woman, is to receive being in both soul and body, in consequence of a conception in her womb. The soul is the principal part of the man; and sonship implies derivation of the soul as well as the body, by conception. Not that the soul is a part of the mother, as the body is. Though the soul is no part of the mother, and be immediately given by God, yet that hinders not its being derived by conception; it being consequent on it, according to a law of nature. It is agreeable to a

law of nature, that where a perfect human body is conceived in the womb of a woman, and properly nourished and increased, a human soul should come into being: and conception may as properly be the cause whence it is derived, as many other natural effects are derived from natural causes and antecedents. For it is the power of God which produces these effects, though it be according to an established law. The soul being so much the principal part of man, a derivation of the soul by conception, is the chief thing implied in a man's being the son of a woman.

8. According to what seems to be Dr. Watts's scheme, the Son of God is no distinct divine Person from the Father. So far as he is a divine Person, he is the same Person with the Father. So that in the covenant of redemption, the Father covenants with himself, and he takes satisfaction of himself, &c. Unless you will say, that one nature covenanted with the other; the two natures in the same person covenanted together, and one nature in the same person, took satisfaction of the other nature in the same person. But how does this confound our minds, instead of helping our ideas, or making them more easy and intelligible!

9. The Son of God, as a distinct Person, was from eternity. It is said, Mic. v. 2, "His goings forth were of old, from everlasting." So Prov. viii. 23, "I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was." So he is called, Isa. ix. 6, "The everlasting Father." I know of no expressions used in Scripture, more strong, to signify the eternity of the Father himself.

10. Dr. Watts supposes the world to be made by the pre-existent soul of Christ; and thinks it may properly be so said, though the knowledge and power of this pre-existent soul could not extend to the most minute parts, every atom, &c.—But it is evidently the design of the Scripture to assure us that Christ made all things whatever in the absolute universality. John i. 3, "All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made." Col. i. 16, 17, "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in the earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist." Now, if we suppose matter to be infinitely divisible, it will follow, that let his wisdom and power be as great as they will, if finite, but a few of those individual things that are made were the effects of his power and wisdom: yea, that the number of the things that were made by him, are so few, that they bear no proportion to others, that did not immediately fall under his notice; or that of the things that are made, there are ten thousand times, yea infinitely more, not made by him, than are made by him:—and so, but infinitely few of their circumstances are ordered by his wisdom.

11. It is said, Heb. ii. 8, "Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him." Here it is represented, that God the Father has put every individual thing under the power and government of another person, distinct from himself. But this cannot be true of the human soul of Christ, as it must be according to Dr. Watts's scheme, let the powers of that be never so great, if they are not infinite. For things and circumstances, and dependencies and consequences of things in the world, are infinite in number; and therefore a finite understanding and power cannot extend to them: yea, it can extend to but an infinitely small part of the whole number of individuals, and their circumstances and consequences. Indeed, in order to the disposal of a few things in their motions and successive changes, to a certain precise issue, there is need of infinite exactness, and so need of infinite power and wisdom.

12. The work of creation, and so the work of upholding all things in being, can, in no sense, be properly said to be the work of any created nature. If the created nature gives forth the word, as Joshua did, when he said, "Sun, stand thou still;" yet it is not that created nature that does it: that being that depends himself on creating power, does not properly do any thing towards creation, as Joshua did nothing towards stopping the sun in his course. So that it cannot be true in Dr. Watts's scheme, that that Son of God, who is a distinct Person from God the Father, did at all, in any manner of propriety, create the world, nor does he uphold it or govern it. Nor can those things that Christ often says of himself, be true; as, "The Father worketh hitherto, and I work."—"Whatsoever the Father doth, those doth the Son likewise," John v. 17, 19; it being very evident, that the works of creating and upholding and governing the world are ascribed to the Son, as a distinct Person from the Father.

13. It is one benefit or privilege of the Person of Christ, when spoken of as distinct from the Father, to have the Spirit of God under him, to be at his disposal, and to be his Messenger; which is infinitely too much for any creature: John xv. 26; xvi. 7, 13, 14; and Acts ii. 33.

14. Not only is the word *Elohim* in the plural number, but it is joined to a verb of the plural number, in Gen. xx. 13. *When God caused me to wander from my Father's house.* The word *Hithgnu, caused to wander*, is in the plural number. This is agreeable to the use of plural verbs, adjectives and pronouns, in Gen. i. 26; iii. 22: xi. 7. See other instances in Gen. xxxv. 7; Exodus xxxii. 4, compared with Neh. ix. 18; Isaiah xvi. 6.

The very frequent joining of the word *Elohim*, a word in the plural number, with the word *Jehovah*, a word in the singular number (as may be seen in places referred to in the English Concordance, under the words, Lord God, Lord his God, Lord my God, Lord our God, Lord their God, Lord thy God, Lord your God), seems to be a significant indication of the union of several divine persons in one essence. The word *Jehovah* signifies as much as the word *Essence*, and is the proper name of God with regard to his self-existent, eternal, all-sufficient, perfect, and immutable Essence. Moses seems to have regard to something remarkable in thus calling *Elohim*, the plural, so often by the singular name, *Jehovah;* especially in that remark, which he makes for the special observation of God's people Israel, in Deut. vi. 4, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord." In the original, it is *Jehovah Elohenu Jehovah Ehadh;* the more proper translation of which is, *Jehovah our God is one Jehovah.* The verb *is*, is understood, and properly inserted between *Jehovah Elohenu* and *Jehovah Ehadh*, thus *Jehovah Elohenu* is *Jehovah Ehadh;* which, if most literally translated, is thus, *Jehovah Our divine Persons is one Jehovah:* as though Moses, in this remark, had a particular reference to the word *Elohim* being in the plural number, and would guard the people against imagining from thence that there was a plurality of Essences or Beings, among whom they were to divide their affections and respect.

A farther confirmation that the name *Elohim* when used as the name of the True God, signifies some plurality, is, that this same name is commonly, all over the Hebrew Bible, used to signify the gods of the Heathens, when many gods are spoken of. See those places in the Hebrew Bible, which are referred to in the English Concordance, under the word *Gods.*

In Exodus xx. 2, 3, when it is said in the third verse, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," the word is the same as in the foregoing verse, where it is said, "I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt." It is *Elohim* in both verses: I am the Jehovah, thy *Elohim:* thou

shalt have no other *Elohim*. Yet the latter *Elohim* is joined with an adjective of the plural number; which seems naturally to lead the children of Israel, to whom God spake these words, to suppose a plurality in the *Elohim* which brought them out of Egypt, implied in the name *Jehovah*. Psalm lviii. 11, "Verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth; *Elohim Shophetim:* which literally is, *Elohim*, judges (in the plural number). See the evident distinction made between Jehovah *sending*, and Jehovah *sent* to the people, and dwelling in the midst of them, in Zech. ii. 8, 9, 10, 11, and iv. 8, 9, 11: "For thus saith the Lord of Hosts, After the glory hath he *sent* me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye."

"For behold, I will shake mine hand upon them, and they shall be a spoil to their servants: and ye shall know that the Lord of Hosts hath *sent* me."

"Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord."

"And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the Lord of Hosts hath *sent* me unto thee."

"Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the Lord of Hosts hath *sent* me unto you."

"Then answered I, and said unto him, What are these two olive trees upon the right side of the candlestick, and upon the left side thereof?"

Joshua xxiv. 19, "And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve Jehovah: for he is a Holy God, Elohim Kedhoshim." *He is the Holy Gods.* Not only is the word *Elohim* properly plural, the very same that is used, verse 15, the gods which your father's served, &c.—but the adjective *Holy* is plural. A plural substantive and adjective are used here concerning the True God, just in the same manner as in 1 Sam. iv. 8, "Who shall deliver us out of the hands of these mighty Gods." And in Dan. iv. 8, "In whom is the Spirit of the Holy Gods." So ver. 9, 18, and chap. v. 11. That the plural number should thus be used with the epithet *Holy*, agrees well with the doxology of the angels, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts," &c., Isaiah vi., and Rev. iv.

It is an argument, that the Jews of old understood that there were several persons in the Godhead, and particularly, that when the cherubim, in the 6th of Isaiah, cried "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord of Hosts," they had respect to three persons: that the seventy interpreters, in several places, where the Holy One of Israel is spoken of, use the plural number; as in Isaiah xli. 16, "Thou shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel:" in the LXX. it is, *ενφραν θησῃ εν τοις αγιοις Ισραηλ.* Isaiah lx. 14, "The Zion of the Holy One of Israel;" it is *σιων αγιων Ισραηλ* So Jer. li. 5, "Filled with sin against the Holy One of Israel:" *απω των αγιων Ισραηλ.*

MYSTERIES OF SCRIPTURE.

1. If we seek for any thing in the dark by so low a faculty of discerning as the sense of feeling, or by the sense of seeing with a dim light, sometimes we cannot find it; though it be there, it seems to us to be impossible that it should be there. But yet, when a clear light comes to shine into the place, and we discern by a better faculty, viz., of sight, or the same faculty in a clearer manner, the thing appears very plain to us. So, doubtless, many truths will hereafter appear plain, when we come to look on them by the bright light of heaven, that now are involved in mystery and darkness.

2. How are we ready to trust to the determinations of a man, that is universally reputed a man of great genius, of vast penetration and insight into things, if he be positive in any thing that appears to us very mysterious, and is quite contrary to what we thought ourselves clear and certain in before? How are we ready in such a case to suspect ourselves; especially if it be a matter wherein he has been very much versed; has had much more occasion to look into it than we; and has been under greater advantages to know the truth? How much more still, if one should be positive in it, as a thing that he had clearly and undoubtedly seen to be true, if he were still of ten times greater genius, and of a more penetrating insight into things, than any that ever have appeared? And, in matters of fact, if some person whom we had long known, that was a person of great judgment and discretion, justice, integrity and fidelity, and had always been universally so reputed by others, should declare to us, that he had seen and known that to be true which appeared to us very strange and mysterious, and concerning which we could not see how it was possible that it should be; how, in such a case, should we be ready almost to suspect our own faculties, and to give credit to such a testimony, in that which, if he had not positively asserted it, and persisted in it, we should have looked upon as perfectly incredible, and absurd to be supposed?

3. From that text, John iii. 12, "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?" several things are manifest concerning mysteries in religion. (1.) That there are mysteries in religion, or that there are things contained in those doctrines that Christ came into the world to teach, which are not only so far above human comprehension, that men cannot easily apprehend all that is to be understood concerning them; but which are difficult to the understanding, in that sense, that they are difficult to be received by the judgment or belief: "How shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?" Difficult, upon the same account that the doctrine of the new birth was difficult to Nicodemus, because it was so strange, and seemingly impossible. (2.) We may from the words infer, that the more persons or beings are, in themselves, and in their own nature, above us; the more that the doctrines or truths concerning them are mysterious to us, above our comprehension, and difficult to our belief; the more do those things that are really true concerning them, contain seeming inconsistencies and impossibilities. For Christ, in the preceding verses, had been speaking of something that is true concerning man, being of the same nature, an inhabitant of the same world with ourselves; which, therefore, Christ calls an earthly thing. And this seemed

very mysterious and impossible, and to contain great seeming inconsistencies. He says, "How can a man be born when he is old?" This seemed to be a contradiction. And after Christ had somewhat explained himself, still the doctrine seemed strange and impossible; v. 9, "How can these things be?" Nicodemus still looked upon it incredible; and, on that account, did not believe it at that time, as is implied in these words of Christ; "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not." But Christ here plainly signifies, that he had other truths to teach that were not about man, an earthly inhabitant, but about a person vastly above man, even about himself, who is from heaven, and in heaven, as in the next verse: "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven; even the Son of man which is in heaven." Which, therefore, it would be most reasonable to suppose, should be much more difficult to men's understanding and judgment, seeming to contain greater impossibilities and inconsistencies; as he then proceeds immediately to declare to him a heavenly thing, as he calls it, viz., that Christ, a heavenly and divine person, should die, ver. 14, 15. Such a mysterious doctrine, so strange, and seemingly inconsistent and impossible, that a divine person should die, is more strange than that men should be born again. Hence, when divines argue, from the mysterious nature of many things here below, with which we are daily conversant, that it would be very unreasonable to suppose but that there should be things concerning God which are much more mysterious; and that, therefore, it is unreasonable to object against the truth of the doctrines of the Trinity, Incarnation, &c.,—they argue justly, because they argue as Christ argued.

4. "The wiser heathens were sensible, that the things of the gods are so high above us, that no other is to be expected, than that what appertains to them should appear exceedingly mysterious and wonderful to us; and that it is therefore unreasonable to disbelieve what we are taught concerning them on that account. This is fully expressed by that great symbol of Pythagoras, viz., '*Concerning the gods, disbelieve nothing wonderful, nor yet concerning divine things.*' This, says Jamblicus, declareth the superlative excellency of God's instructing us, and puts us in mind, that we ought not to estimate the divine power by our own judgment. The Pythagoreans stretched this rule beyond the line of divine revelation, to the belief of every oriental tradition." *Gale's Court of the Gentiles*, p. 2, b. 2, c. 8, p. 190.

5. It is not necessary that persons should have clear ideas of the things that are the subject of a proposition, in order to their being rationally convinced of the truth of the proposition. There are many truths of which mathematicians are convinced by strict demonstration, concerning many kinds of quantities, as, surd quantities and fluxions; but concerning which they have no clear ideas.

6. Supposing that mankind in general were a species of far less capacity than they are; so much less, that, when men are come to full ripeness of judgment and capacity, they arrived no higher than that degree to which children generally arrive at seven years of age; and supposing a revelation to be made to mankind, in such a state and degree of capacity, of many such propositions in philosophy as are now looked upon as undoubted truths; and let us suppose, at the same time, the same degree of pride and self-confidence as there is now; what cavilling and objecting, &c., would there be!

Or, supposing a revelation of these philosophical truths had been made to mankind, with their present degree of natural capacity, in some ancient generation; suppose that which was in Joshua's time; in that degree of acquired knowledge and learning which the world had arrived at then, *how incredible* would those truths have seemed!

7. If things, which fact and experience make certain, such as the miseries infants sometimes are the subjects of in this world, &c., had been exhibited only in a revelation of things in an unseen state, they would be as much disputed as the Trinity and other mysteries revealed in the Bible.

8. There is nothing impossible or absurd in the doctrine of the *Incarnation of Christ*. If God can join a body and a rational soul together, which are of natures so heterogeneous and opposite, that they cannot, of themselves, act one upon another; may he not be able to join two spirits together, which are of natures more similar? And, if so, he may, for aught we know to the contrary, join the soul or spirit of a man to himself. Had reason been so clear in it, that a God cannot be incarnate, as many pretend, it could never have suffered such a notion to gain ground, and possess the minds of so many nations: nay, and of Julian himself, who says that "Jupiter begat Esculapius out of his own proper substance, and sent him down to Epidaurus, to heal the distempers of mankind." Reason did not hinder Spinosa, Blount, and many other modern philosophers from asserting, that God may have a body; or rather that the universe, or the matter of the universe, is God. Many nations believed the incarnation of Jupiter himself. Reason, instead of being utterly averse to the notion of a divine incarnation, hath easily enough admitted that notion, and suffered it to pass almost without contradiction, among the most philosophical nations of the world.

9. "In thinking of God's raising so many myriads of spirits, and such prodigious masses of matter out of nothing, we are lost and astonished, as much as in the contemplation of the Trinity. We can follow God but one or two steps in his lowest and plainest works, till all becomes mystery and matter of amazement to us. How, then, shall we comprehend Himself? How, shall we understand His nature, or account for His actions? In that he contains what is infinitely more inconceivable than all the wonders of his creation put together." *Deism Revealed*, Edit. 2, Vol. II. p. 93, 94.

Those that deny the Trinity, because of the mysteriousness of it, and its seeming inconsistence, yet, generally own God's certain prescience of men's free actions, which they suppose to be free in such a sense, as not to be necessary.—So that we may do, or may not do, that which God certainly foresees. "They also hold, that such a freedom without necessity, is necessary to morality; and that virtue and goodness consist in any one's doing good when he might do evil. And yet they suppose that God acts according to the eternal law of nature and reason, and that it is impossible that he should transgress that law, and do evil; because that would be a contradiction to his own nature, which is infinitely and unchangeably virtuous. Now this seems a flat contradiction. To say, that the infinite goodness of God's nature makes it utterly impossible for God to do evil, is exactly the same as to say, he is under a natural necessity not to do evil. And to say he is morally free, is to say, he may do evil. Therefore the necessity and freedom in this case being both moral, the contradiction is flat and plain; and amounts to this, that God, in respect to good and evil actions, is both a necessary and free agent. Dr. Clark, in his treatise on the Attributes, labors to get clear of this contradiction upon these principles of liberty, but without success; and leaves it just where all men who hold the same principles, must be forced to leave it.

"Therefore, they hold such mysteries in respect to Deity, that are even harder to be conceived of, or properly expressed and explained, than the doctrine of the Trinity.

"When we talk of God, who is infinite and incomprehensible, it is natural

to run into notions and terms which it is impossible for us to reconcile. And in lower matters, that are more within our knowledge and comprehension, we shall not be able to keep ourselves clear of them. To say that a curve line, setting out from a point within a hair's breadth of a right line, shall run towards that right line as swift as thought, and yet never be able to touch it, seems contrary to common sense; and were it not clearly demonstrated in the conchoid of Nechomedes, could never be believed. Matter is infinitely divisible; and therefore a cubical inch of gold may be divided into an infinity of parts; and there can be no number greater than that which contains an infinity. Yet another cubical inch of gold may be infinitely divided also; and therefore, the parts of both cubes must be more numerous than the parts of one only. Here is a palpable contrariety of ideas, and a flat contradiction of terms. We are confounded and lost in the consideration of infinites; and surely most of all, in the consideration of that *Infinite of infinites*. We justly admire that saying of the philosopher, that *God is a being whose centre is everywhere, and circumference nowhere*, as one of the noblest and most exalted flights of human understanding; and yet, not only the terms are absurd and contradictory, but the very ideas that constitute it, when considered attentively, are repugnant to one another. Space and duration are mysterious abysses in which our thoughts are confounded with demonstrable propositions, to all sense and reason flatly contradictory to one another. Any two points of time, though never so distant, are exactly in the middle of eternity. The remotest points of space that can be imagined or supposed, are each of them precisely in the centre of infinite space." *Deism Revealed*, Vol. II. p. 109, 110, 111.

Here might have been added the mysteries of God's eternal duration, it being without succession, present, before and after, all at once: *Vitæ interminabilis tota simul et perfecta possessio.* See *the nature of the human soul* on this head.

10. To reject every thing but what we can first see to be agreeable to our reason, tends, by degrees, to bring every thing relating not only to revealed religion, but even natural religion, into doubt; to make all its doctrines appear with dim evidence, like a shadow, or the ideas of a dream, till they are all neglected as worthy of no regard. It tends to make men doubt of the several attributes of God, and so, in every respect, to doubt what kind of being God is; and to make men doubt about the forgiveness of sin, and about the duties of religion, prayer, and giving thanks, social worship, &c. It will tend at last, to make men esteem the science of religion as of no value, and so totally neglect it; and from step to step it will lead to skepticism, atheism, ignorance, and at length to barbarity, &c.

11. Concerning common sense, it is to be observed, that common inclination, or the common dictates of inclination are often called common sense. When any thing is shocking to the common dispositions or inclinations of men, that is called a contradicting of common sense. So, the doctrine of the extreme and everlasting torments of hell, being contrary to men's common folly and stupidity, is often called contrary to common sense. Men, through stupidity are insensible of the great evil of sin; and so the punishment of sin threatened in the word of God disagrees with this insensibility, and is said to be contradictory to common sense. In this case, that turn of mind which arises from a wicked disposition, goes for common sense.

"We ought never to deny, because we cannot conceive. If this were not so, then a man born blind would reason right when he forms this syllogism, 'We know the figure of bodies only by handling them; but it is impossible to

handle them at a great distance; therefore it is impossible to know the figure of far distant bodies.' To undeceive the blind man, we may prove to him that this is so, from the concurrent testimony of all who surround him. But we can never make him perceive how this is so. It is therefore a fundamental maxim in all true philosophy, that many things may be incomprehensible, and yet demonstrable; that though seeing clearly be a sufficient reason for affirming, yet, not seeing at all, can never be a reason for denying." *Ramsay's Philosophical Principles of Religion*, Vol. I. p. 22, 23.

12. One method used to explode every thing that is in the least difficult to the understanding, out of religion, is to ridicule all distinctions in religion. The unreasonableness of this may appear from what Mr. Locke observes concerning discerning and judgment. Hum. Underst., Book II. chap. 2: "Accurately discriminating ideas one from another, is of that consequence to the other knowledge of the mind, that, so far as this faculty is in itself dull, or not rightly made use of, for distinguishing one thing from another, so far our notions are confused, and our reason and judgment disturbed or misled. If in having ideas in the memory ready at hand, consists quickness of parts; in this of having them unconfused, and being able nicely to distinguish one thing from another, where there is but the least difference, consists in a great measure the exactness of judgment, and clearness of reason, which is to be observed in one man above another. Judgment lies in separating carefully one from another, ideas wherein can be found the least difference, thereby to avoid being misled by similitude, and by affinity to take one thing for another."

So Dr. Turnbull in his Principles of Moral Philosophy, Part I. chap. 3, p. 94: "Judgment is rightly said to lie in nicely distinguishing the disagreements and variances or differences of ideas; those especially which lie more remote from common observation, and are not generally adverted to. The man of judgment or discretion (for so discretion properly signifies) may be defined to be one who has a particular aptitude to descry differences of all kinds between objects, even the most hidden and remote from vulgar eyes."

13. If any respect to the Divine Being is of importance, then speculative points are of importance; for the only way whereby we know what he is, is by speculation. He is a speculative being in that sense. If our doctrines concerning him are not right, it will not be that Being, but some other, that we have respect for. So it may be said concerning our respect for Christ. If our doctrines concerning him, concerning his divinity, for instance, are false, we have not respect for the Christ of whom the Scriptures speak, but for an imaginary person, infinitely diverse. When it is said by some that the only fundamental article of faith is, that Jesus is the Messiah; if thereby be meant, that a person called by that name, or that lived at such a time or place, was the Messiah; that name not implying any properties or qualities of his person, the doctrine is exceedingly unreasonable; for surely the name and the place are not of so great importance as some other things essential in his person, and have not so great concern in the identity of the object of our ideas and respect, as the person the gospel reveals. If that Jesus the gospel tells us of be a divine person, then to suppose a Jesus that is a mere man, makes the object of our ideas and regard infinitely more diverse from the gospel Jesus, than to have a different name, and to suppose him to be of a different time and place. It is one great reason why speculative points are thought to be of so little importance, that the modern religion consists so little in respect to the Divine Being, and almost wholly in benevolence to men.

14. Concerning this which is often said by some, that all things that are

necessary to salvation are plain and clear, let us consider how and in what sense this is true, and in what sense it is not true. 1st. It is true that all things that are necessary to salvation are clearly and plainly revealed. But it does not follow, that they shall appear to be plainly revealed to all men. Nothing, no divine thing, can have evidence sufficient to appear evident to all men, however great their prejudices are, and however perverse their dispositions. 2dly. If thereby is meant that all things necessary to be believed are easily comprehended, there is no reason in such an assertion, nor is it true.

Some late writers insist, that, for a thing to be revealed, and yet remain mysterious, is a contradiction; that it is as much as to say, a thing is revealed, and yet hid. I answer: the thing revealed is the truth of the doctrine: so that the truth of it no longer remains hid, though many things concerning the manner may be so. Yet many things concerning the nature of the things revealed may be clear, though many things concerning the nature of the same things may remain hid. God requires us to understand no more than is intelligibly revealed. That which is not distinctly revealed, we are not required distinctly to understand. It may be necessary for us to know a thing in part, and yet not necessary to know it perfectly.

15. The importance of all Christian doctrines whatsoever, will naturally be denied, in consequence of denying that one great doctrine of the necessity of Christ's satisfaction to divine justice, and maintaining those doctrines that establish men's own righteousness, as that on which, and for which, they are accepted of God. For that great Christian doctrine of Christ's satisfaction, his vicarious sufferings and righteousness, by which he offered an infinite price to God for our pardon and acceptance to eternal favor and happiness, is what all evangelical doctrines, all doctrines beside the truths of natural religion, have relation to; and they are of little importance, comparatively, any other way than as they have respect to that. This is, as it were, the centre and hinge of all doctrines of pure revelation.

16. Indeed, the Papists, who are very far from having such a notion of that evangelical faith, which is the special condition of salvation in opposition to works, and have forsaken the evangelical notion of true saving religion, yet, with fiery zeal, insist on the profession of a great number of doctrines, and several of the doctrines of pure revelation, as the Trinity, &c. But this in them flows not from any regard to their influence in internal saving religion, but from quite another view, i. e., to uphold their tyranny. These are the doctrines which have been handed down among them by their church from ancient tradition; and to maintain the credit of the infallibility, and divine authority and dominion of their hierarchy, over men's faith, they must be zealous against any that presume to deny Christ's doctrines, because they look upon it as an infringement on the high authority they claim. And some Protestants have a zeal for doctrines from like views; doctrines that indeed they have no great value for in themselves considered.

17. That it is not alone sufficient to believe that one article, that a person of the name of *Jesus* came from God to reveal his will to man, without knowing or determining what he was, or concerning his nature and qualities, is evident from this, that it is often spoken of as necessary to *know* Christ. It is said, "This is eternal life, to know thee, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

18. There are two things especially that make modern fashionable divines look on doctrines of revealed religion of little importance. One is, their mistake about the conditions of salvation; another is, their mistake about the nature of true virtue, placing it chiefly, and most essentially, in benevolence to men, and

so little in respect to God and Christ. If Christian virtue consists very much in a proper respect to Christ, then certainly it is of great importance to know what sort of person he is, at least, as to that particular wherein his excellency or worthiness of regard consists, which is surely his divinity, if he be a divine person. Another thing on which a proper respect to him depends, is his relation to us, and our dependence upon him; which surely chiefly depends on his satisfaction and merits for us, if he has satisfied and merited for us. The reasons or grounds of the love and honor to Christ required of us, consist chiefly in two things: 1, in what he is: and 2, in what he has done for us. Therefore, with regard to the latter, it concerns us greatly to know, at least as to the principal things, what they are. And if he has satisfied for our sins; if he has suffered in our stead; if he has truly purchased eternal life and happiness for us; if he has redeemed us from an extremely and perfectly sinful, miserable, helpless state, a state wherein we deserved no mercy, but eternal misery without mercy; then these are principal things.

Another reason why doctrines are thought to be of little importance, is a notion of *sincerity* wherein true virtue consists, as what may be prior to any means of it that God grants; as if it was what every man had in his power, antecedently to all means; and so the means are looked upon as of little importance. But the absurdity of this may be easily manifested. If it be independent of all means, then it may be independent of natural information, or of the truths of the light of nature, as well as of revealed religion; and men may sincerely regard and honor they know not what. The truths of natural religion, wherein Christians differ from the most ignorant, brutish, and deluded idolaters, the most savage and cruel of the heathen nations, may be of little importance. And the reason why they have this notion of sincerity antecedent to means, and so independent on means is, that they have a notion that sincerity is independent on God, any otherwise than as they depend on him for their creation. They conceive it to be independent on his sovereign will and pleasure. If they were sensible that they depend on God to give it according to his pleasure, it would be easy and natural to acknowledge, that God gives it in his own way, and by his own means.

19. If any article of faith at all concerning Jesus Christ be of importance, it must be of importance to know or believe something concerning his person; who he is, and what he was; what sort of a person or being he was. And if any thing concerning him be of importance to be known and believed, it must be something wherein his excellency or worthiness of regard consists: for nothing can be of importance to be known or believed about him, but in order to some regard or respect of heart. But most certainly, if any thing of his excellency and dignity be of importance to be known or believed, it must be of importance at least to know so much about him, as to know whether he be God or a mere creature; for herein lies the greatest difference, as to dignity, that possibly can be. This difference is infinite. If it be of importance to know how worthy he is, then it doubtless is of importance that we should not be ignorant of, and deny, as it were, all his dignity, or so much of it, that what remains shall be absolutely as nothing to that which is denied. It is of importance that we love Christ, or have respect to him as one that is excellent, and worthy of esteem and love. The apostle says, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha." And doubtless, true love to Christ is in some respect suitable to the worthiness and excellency of his person. Therefore it is of importance to believe, and not to deny those doctrines which exhibit his worthiness. It is of importance that we do not in effect deny the whole of his worthiness.

20. How many things were believed by the ancient philosophers about divine matters, even the most rational of them more mysterious than the doctrine of the Trinity, chiefly because such things were handed to them by the Phœnicians, Egyptians, Chaldeans, or Persians, or on the authority of some great master! Yet these things were imbibed without much difficulty, the incomprehensibleness of the doctrines being no objection to their receiving them.

21. There are things evidently true concerning the nature of our own souls, that seem strange paradoxes, and are seeming contradictions; as, that our souls are in no place, and yet have a being; or, if they are supposed to be in a place, that yet they are not confined to place, and limited to certain space; or, if they be, that they are not of a certain figure; or, if they are figurate, that their properties, faculties, and acts, should or should not be so too.

22. If many things we all see and know of the mortality of mankind, the extreme sufferings of infants, and other things innumerable in the state of the world of mankind, were only matter of doctrine which we had no notice of any other way than by revelation, and not by fact and experience; have we not reason to think, from what we see of the temper of this age, that they would be exceedingly quarrelled with, objected mightily against, as inconsistent with God's moral perfections, not tending to amiable ideas of the Godhead, &c. &c.

23. The definition of a *mystery*, according to *Stapferus*, Theo. Polem. p 263, and 858, is this: a *mystery* is a religious doctrine, which must be made known by immediate revelation, and cannot be known and demonstrated from the principles of reason, but is above reason, and which in this whole universe has nothing like itself, but differs from all those truths which we discover in this system of the world.

Ibid. p. 859. It appears from the definition, that whatever is known by divine revelation, and is not certain from the principles of reason, is a *mystery*, otherwise it could not be said to be revealed.

Revelation cannot be conceived of without mysteries; and mysteries are the first thing which we conceive concerning revelation; for no revelation can be conceived without mysteries, and therefore they constitute the sum and essence of revelation.

It is to be observed, that we ought to distinguish between those things which were written in the sacred books by the immediate inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and those which were only committed to writing by the direction of the Holy Spirit. To the former class belong all the mysteries of salvation, or all those things which respect the means of our deliverance taught in the gospel, which could not be known from the principles of reason, and therefore must be revealed. But to the other class those things belong, which either are already known from natural religion, but are of service to inculcate duty on man, and to demonstrate the necessity of a revelation of the means of salvation; or are histories, useful to illustrate and to assure us of the doctrines revealed, and which point out the various degrees of revelation, the different dispensations of salvation, and the various modes of governing the church of God; all which are necessary to be known in the further explanation of mysteries.

Mysteries constitute the criterion of divine revelation: so absurdly do they act, who allow a revelation and deny mysteries; or deny revelation for this reason, that it contains mysteries. What the sum and essence of revelation or of revealed religion, are, is plain from the end of it, which is this, to point out to sinful men the means of obtaining salvation, and of recovering the divine favor. But this means is, that Jesus Christ is the only and most perfect cause of salvation, to be received by a true faith. This doctrine, however, is a mys-

tery of godliness manifestly great; 1 Tim. iii. 16. And thus that great mystery constitutes the sum and essence of revelation. The essence of revealed religion consists in this, that men by a true faith receive this doctrine, which the apostle calls a mystery manifestly great. Therefore the knowledge of the greatest mystery belongs to the very essence of the religion of a sinner.

How absurd do many of the doctrines of mathematicians and astronomers appear to ignorant men, when they cannot see the reason of those doctrines, although they are most true and evident, so that not the least doubt concerning them can remain in the mind of a thorough mathematician? *Ibid.* tom. iii. p. 560.

Since, in religion, there are some primary truths, and others more remote, which are deduced from the former by reasoning, and so are secondary, and these last may not be known, though the primary are known, but when once they are known they cannot be denied; it follows that those articles which constitute religion, and so are fundamental, are to be distinguished into primary and secondary. The primary are those of which a man cannot be ignorant, consistently with true religion and his own salvation; and they are necessary with a necessity of *means*. The secondary are those of which a man may be ignorant, consistently with his resting upon the foundation of true religion, and with his own salvation; and those are necessary with a necessity of *command*. Therefore, to the same man, certain doctrines may be now fundamental, which were not fundamental to him before he knew them. *Ibid.* tom. i. p. 524, 524.

Joh. Chr. Kirchmejerus, in his Dissert. concerning fundamental articles, says, "They may be either reduced to fewer, or extended to more; as often one article may include the rest, and so all may be reduced to that one; and on the other hand, that one, according to the various truths contained in it, may be divided into several. Therefore, authors do not contradict themselves, who reduce all fundamental articles to one: for they cannot well be determined by their number; because as many fundamental truths are contained in one fundamental truth, as there are essential properties belonging to the truths thus contained. Therefore the holy Scripture often sums up all fundamental articles in one, as in John xvii. 3: "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." Sometimes it distinguishes them into several; as in 1 Tim. i. 5: "Now the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." *Ibid.* tom. i. p. 528.

On account of the various degrees of men's capacities, and the various circumstances of the times in which they live, one man may know truths which another cannot know. Whence it follows that the very same articles are not fundamental to all men; but accordingly as revelation hath been more or less complete, according to the several dispensations under which men have lived, their various natural abilities, and their various modes and circumstances of living, different articles are, and have been, fundamental to different men. This is very plain from the different degrees of knowledge before and since the coming of Christ; for before his coming, many truths lay hid, which are now set in the most clear light: and the instance of the apostles, abundantly shows the truth of what I have now advanced; who, although they were already in a state of grace, and their salvation was secured, yet for some time were ignorant of the necessity of the sufferings and death of Christ, and of the true nature of his kingdom. Whereas, he who now does not acknowledge, or perhaps denies, the necessity of Christ's death, is by all means to be considered as in a fundamental error. Therefore, as a man hath received of God greater or less

natural abilities, so let the number of articles to which he shall give his asse be greater or smaller; and as revelation hath been made or information hath been given, to a man, more clearly or obscurely, in the same proportion is more or less required of him. Therefore, in our own case, we ought to be cautious of even the smallest errors, and to aim at the highest degree of knowledge in divine truths. In the case of others we ought to judge concerning them with the greatest prudence, mildness, and benevolence. Hence we see, that a certain precise number of articles, which shall be necessary and fundamental to every man, cannot be determined. *Ibid.* p. 531.

If one single article of faith be so comprehensive, that in it are involved all things necessary to salvation, a man is not to be condemned as a latitudinarian, or as indifferent to all other doctrines, because he says that one article only is fundamental. For instance, that by the grace of the Triune God, Jesus, the true and eternal God, having assumed the human nature, became, through his satisfaction for sin, by his sufferings and death, the only and most perfect cause of our salvation; who, therefore, together with the whole sacred Trinity, is, in the way of self-denial, to be sought, loved and worshipped. *Ibid.* p. 532

OBSERVATIONS

UPON

PARTICULAR PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE.

Genesis ii. 1.—"Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them." This argues that the angels belong to the Mosaic creation, who are so often spoken of as God's host, and as the hosts of heaven.

Genesis iv. 23, 24.—"And Lamech said unto his wives, Adah and Zillah, I have slain a man to my wounding," &c. The probable design of the Holy Ghost in relating this, is to show the great increase of the depravity and corruption of the world, or of Cain's posterity and those that adhered to them.—This is shown in the particular instance of Lamech, the chief man of Cain's posterity, in his day. Lamech had been guilty of murdering some man that he had a quarrel with. And he justifies himself in it, and endeavors to satisfy his wives that he shall escape with impunity, from the instance of Cain, whose life God spared, and even took special care that no man should kill him, making the declaration, that if any man killed him, vengeance should be taken of him seven-fold, though the man he slew was his brother, and a righteous man, and had done him no injury. But the man *he* had slain *in* or *for* his wounding (as the words are interpreted by some learned men, see Pool's Synopsis in Loc.), i. e., the man he had slain had injured or wounded him. Therefore, if Cain should be avenged seven-fold, doubtless *he* seventy-and-seven-fold. By this speech to his wives, he shows his impenitence and presumption, and great insensibility. When Cain had slain his brother his conscience greatly troubled him. But Lamech with great obduracy shakes off all remorse, and as it were bids defiance to all fear and trouble about the matter.

Genesis iv. 26.—"And to Seth, to him also was born a son, and he called his name Enos. Then men began to call upon the name of the Lord." The right translation probably is, *Then began men to call by the name of the Lord, or in the name of the Lord*, i. e., then they began to call themselves, and their children by, or *in* his name: signifying that then the people of God, of whom Seth was the principal man, and as it were their head, leader, and chief priest, being with his posterity appointed another seed (seed or generation of God) instead of Abel; I say, then the people of God began openly to separate themselves from the wicked apostate world of the posterity of Cain, and those that joined with them; and began to appear in a visibly distinct society, being called the children of God, when the other were called the children of men.

The children and posterity were looked upon as being in the name of the father, and upholding his name. See Numb. xxvii. 4; Deut. ix. 14, and xxv. 7; 1 Sam. xxiv. 21; 2 Sam. xviii. 18; Ruth iv. 5; Job xviii. 17; Isai. xiv. 22; Gen. xlviii. 16, compared with Numb. vi. 27. On the birth of Enos it probably first began to be a custom for parents openly to dedicate their children to God, and call them by his name, and as it were insert them

into his name, by bringing them to the place of public worship; the transaction being personal, by the parents' solemn declaration and covenant, attended with prayer and sacrifice.

Genesis ix. 26.—"Blessed be the Lord God of Shem." By Jehovah, the God of Shem, seems especially meant Jesus Christ, who was of his posterity, and eminently his *seed*. The blessing here pronounced on Japhet, is on his posterity. And the curse of Canaan respects his posterity. Therefore it is reasonable to understand the blessing of Shem to be also on his posterity.

Genesis xxix. 20.—"And Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her." Jacob was a type of Christ, in his obtaining his wife by a servitude, and in his servitude's seeming so light to him, and his going so cheerfully through it, for the love wherewith he loved her. That Jacob might enjoy his beloved Rachel, was the joy set before him; for which he despised the difficulty of his servitude. So, that Christ might redeem his church and present it to himself a glorious and blessed church, to dwell with him in glory for ever, was the joy that was set before him, for which he endured the cross and despised the shame.

Genesis xlv.—Joseph's making himself known to his brethren. It is without all doubt that one thing signified by Joseph's being hated of his brethren, with a mortal hatred, their intending to kill him, and selling him to the Gentiles, was the rejection of Christ by the Jews his brethren, his being hated, and envied, and slain by them, and delivered up to the Gentiles; see Psal. lxix. 6, Matt. xx. 19. So Joseph's brethren being brought to repentance, and Joseph's being made known to them, their being reconciled and received with great joy, represents the future conversion of the Jews, their being brought to repentance after having rejected and crucified Christ, and the great joy and gladness there shall be on that occasion. This affair was much taken notice of by Pharaoh and his servants, and was very pleasing to them. So the coming in of the Jews will be life from the dead to the Gentiles.

Deut. viii. 4.—"Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell these forty years." This was probably a type of the desirableness of the clothing of the spiritual Israel, in their journey through the wilderness of this world towards the heavenly Canaan. The saints' grace or righteousness is often represented as this clothing. [Neither did thy foot swell.] If their feet had swollen they would not have been able to proceed any farther. But the righteous shall be enabled to hold on his way; and God will keep the feet of his saints, and establish their goings. This seems to be the chief reason why this is remarked, viz., because it was a type. For in itself it seems no very extraordinary thing, that their foot did not swell. For they lay still most of the time; and when they travelled it is probable it was not by long journeys, but as the women and children could bear.

Deut. xxxii. 2.—"My doctrine shall drop as the rain; my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass." God here speaks to the people quite in a different manner from what he did at Mount Sinai, when he spake to them out of the midst of the fire. God's word then was like thunder and lightning and devouring fire, threatening to overbear and consume so frail and tender a creature as man, who is like the grass and flower of the field. God's voice now is gentle. It is heard in pleasant song. Instead of being like lightning to destroy and consume, it is like the gentle showers, and refreshing dew on the tender grass, revealing, not his wrath, but his great mercy, in a manner adapted to men's tender frame. In this song is much of the glorious gospel. Even the warnings and threatenings that are

in it, are delivered in an evangelical manner, much in the same way that they were delivered in the mild language of the glorious Messiah. All the songs of the Scripture are the voice of the gospel. The glorious things of the gospel are their foundation and subject matter; and therefore in them God's word drops as the rain.

Deut. xxxiii. 8.—"And of Levi he said, Let thy urim and thy thummim be with thy holy one, whom thou didst prove at Massah, and with whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah." Here Christ is evidently called Levi's holy one. Aaron, the high priest of that tribe, was Levi's holy one in some sense. But it was not Aaron, but Christ, that was tempted at Massah and Meribah (1 Cor. x. 9). Moses also was of that tribe, and might be called their holy one; but neither was he the person there tempted. Both Moses and Aaron rather concurred with the people in tempting. Numb. xx. 10—13. Christ, the great antitype of Moses and Aaron, the true high priest, that was the substance and end of all the ancient sacrifices and offerings, and of all the peculiar ministrations of the high priest of the tribe of Levi, according to Jer. xxxiii. 17—22, may well be called Levi's holy one. For it is there represented as the great honor and privilege of Levi, that his priesthood was to be upheld and completed in Christ. All the honor and privilege that there ever was in having the priesthood of his tribe, arose from the relation of that priesthood to Christ, the glorious things which he should accomplish by the sacrifice of himself, and the eternal benefits he should procure. Therefore this is properly mentioned in the blessing uttered by Moses with respect to this tribe. The priesthood was not a vain thing, but of unspeakable value, as it stood in relation to the priesthood of Christ, and was to be brought to its infinitely glorious and interesting effect in him. It was by the Urim and the Thummim that the high priest was especially furnished to make intercession for the people, and to reveal the mind and will of God to them. The Urim and Thummim had their principal importance, as they were typical, and represented the perfection, and merit, the light and glory, there are in Christ.

2 Sam. xv.—Absalom seems to have been a type of Antichrist. He was the son of David; as the man of sin was originally a Christian bishop, one of the ministers of the gospel, who in a peculiar manner are Christ's sons. Absalom was David's son by Maacah, daughter of the king of Geshur, the only wife that he had that was a Gentile. So Popery is a mixture of Christianity with Heathenism. Absalom was the son of a Heathen mother, or one that had been a Heathen. So the Papistical church is the daughter of old Heathen Rome. Absalom usurped his father's authority over his kingdom, his city Jerusalem, and over his house. So the pope usurps the authority of Christ, sets himself up to be king in his kingdom, and takes possession of the church, the true spiritual Jerusalem, sitting in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Absalom was a person of great beauty, and was admired, and praised by the people for his beauty. So it has been with the pope. Whereas Christ appeared in a mean and low condition, without any external splendor, and when the people saw him there was no beauty in him wherefore they should desire him; Antichrist appears in great external pomp and glory, decked with gold and silver and precious stones, fine linen and scarlet, which all the world has admired and wondered after, saying, Who is like unto the beast? Absalom cloaked his rebellion and usurpation with a pretence of religion. Like Antichrist, he said to his father, chap. xv. ver. 7, 8, "Let me go and pay my vow which I have vowed," &c. Absalom drove David, and those that adhered to him, out of Jerusalem. So Antichrist casts out of the church all the true and faithful followers of Christ.

David went away into the wilderness, and all his faithful subjects went with him, wherever he went. Which is agreeable to what is represented to be the spirit and practice of the true followers of Christ in the time of Antichrist, Rev. xix. 4. "These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth."

1 Kings xix. 19, 20.—"So he departed thence and found Elisha," &c. The truth with respect to what is related in these verses probably was thus. Elijah was directed by the Spirit of God to cast his mantle upon Elisha. But Elijah had not the design of God fully made known to him; supposing it to be intended as a sign that Elisha should be prophet after him, agreeable to what God had said to him at Mount Sinai. But God had a farther meaning in it, which was intimated by his Spirit, which went with Elijah's mantle as it passed over to Elisha; viz., that he should immediately forsake all, and devote himself to the performance of the business of a prophet. Elisha, supposing that Elijah had this design of God made known to him, and had been directed to cast his mantle on him, with this view, has at first some reluctance, and desires of Elijah that, by his prayers, he would obtain leave of God for him to go first and kiss his father and mother. Elijah, surprised at this request, as was natural, supposing him thus ignorant, says, Go back; for what have I done that should hinder it? However, Elisha, who understood the mind of God, soon recovers from his reluctance, and went no further back than his oxen; and took them and the instruments, and offered up all to God, signifying by this action, his full consent to make a sacrifice of all his worldly possessions to the great and infinitely important concerns of his ministry.

2 Chron. v. 12, 13, 14.—When the priests and Levites were as one to make one sound, in praising God with singing and instruments of music, saying, He is good, for his mercy endureth forever, then the glory of the Lord came and filled the house. So, when it shall come to that in the latter days, that the ministers of the gospel shall generally be united in preaching the true doctrines of it, those doctrines that are in a peculiar manner evangelical, by which is manifested the glory of God's eternal mercy; free, sovereign, and immutable grace, through Christ Jesus, and shall be united in affection, and act in union, as fellow laborers and fellow helpers, then shall the glory of God remarkably appear; the Spirit of God, a spirit of light, holiness and joy, shall descend from heaven in a very new and glorious manner, and remarkable success attend the preaching of the gospel everywhere; and then shall be the proper commencement of the church's rest, peace and glory upon earth. The peaceful reign of Solomon, in the possession of unparalleled wisdom, riches and glory, after the militant and tumultuous reign of David, is evidently typical of the peaceful, joyous, and glorious reign of Christ in the latter day: and God's dwelling in the temple, as the settled place of his rest, after removing to and fro in a tabernacle, is typical of the glorious manner of his dwelling with his church in the latter day, as compared with preceding times. The largeness of the temple compared with the tabernacle, represents the vast increase of the church; and the cloud of glory filling the temple, represents the filling of the whole earth with God's glory.

Psal. lxxxii. 8.—"Arise, O God, judge the earth, for thou shalt inherit all nations." The design of these words, in their connection with the foregoing verses, confirms, that the princes of Israel are there called gods, and sons of God, with reference to Christ, the true King of Israel, and as being types of him. The three verses in their connection import thus much: *God has given these princes and judges the name of gods or sons of God, as they are exalted to the place of kings and saviours of his people, who are God's heritage or king-*

dom, but they die like men ; whereby it appears, that they are no gods, nor are the true sons of God ; but were men, and no more than images and shadows of him. But oh ! that he who is truly God, who is indeed the Son of God, the true king, judge and saviour of God's people, the antitype of these, would come and reign, not only over the land of Israel, but over the whole earth ; when God's Israel shall fill the earth, and all nations shall be God's people. It is observable that when it is said in this verse, "Arise, O God," the word God is Elohim, the same that is used verse 6th, "I have said ye are gods." They were called Elohim ; but Christ is the true Elohim ; just as the manna in the wilderness was called bread, but Christ is the true bread from heaven.

Psalms lxxiii. 4.—"There are no bands in their death." In the original the words are, Ein, chartzabbuth Lemotham," which might more properly have been rendered, *their death hath no bands ;* the Hebrew of the Latin verb sum, with the prefix Lamed, being used for *have.* The meaning seems to be, that they appear to be at liberty from death, as though they were out of his reach. Their death is here represented as a person that is indeed their enemy, or an officer of vengeance, that they greatly deserve to be delivered up to, and that has a commission against them, and would fain seize them, and make them his prisoners, but has no bands to bind them. They live long, and live without the fears of death, which are, as it were, the bands of death. That this is the meaning is confirmed by the following words of the sentence: "But their strength is firm."

Jer. xxxi. 32.—"Not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt." That covenant was, as it were, founded in the redemption out of Egypt. Therefore when God made it with the people, he prefaced it thus: "I am the Lord thy God which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, and out of the house of bondage." It is hence natural to suppose, that the covenant of which the prophet here speaks, would not be one founded on that redemption ; but on some other, far better and more glorious redemption.

Zech. xiv. 4.—"And his feet shall stand that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem, on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof towards the east, and towards the west, and there shall be a very great valley," &c. The mountains were round about Jerusalem like a wall ; of which Mount Olivet was the chief. This stood on the east, between Jerusalem and the greatest Gentile nations ; those nations that were the most malignant and formidable enemies of Israel. The dividing of this mountain under the feet of Zion's Redeemer, and making such a wide valley or plain on the east of Jerusalem, whereby there would be any easy access for the Gentile nations, signifies the breaking down of the partition wall between the church of God, and those that are without, and afar off ; and that remarkable removing of obstacles signified by God's causing that every mountain and hill should be brought low ; and the drying up of the river Euphrates, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. The mountain's being thus divided, by Christ's treading on it, significantly and beautifully represents the ease with which, in the exercise of his sovereign and mighty power, he overcomes the strongest and proudest enemies that oppose the salvation of his elect ; agreeably to what is said in the fourth chapter of this book, verse 7th, "Who art thou, O great mountain ! Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain." And chap. viii. 6, "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, if it be marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, should it also be marvellous in my eyes, saith the Lord of Hosts ?" The opening made through the mountains here is

represented as very wide, to signify the abundant grace, and free and open access for vast multitudes; agreeably to Isa. lx. 11, and Rev. xxi. 25.

Matt. xii. 30, "He that is not with me is against me." The true reason of Christ's making this observation in this place, where he is reproving the Pharisees for saying, that he cast out devils by Beelzebub, is this: these Pharisees had, till now, appeared to exercise that kind of prudence, falsely so called, which is commonly to be seen among those, who count themselves wise and great men, and think it becomes them to let matters of religion much alone, and not to appear forward and zealous, or give out their thoughts freely. When, in view of the miracles which Christ wrought, the multitude were affected, and some appeared zealous to follow him; when the esteem that he gained among the people was so great that they apprehended themselves in danger of having their glory eclipsed, and of losing the respect of the people, and their authority over them, the Pharisees could keep silence no longer. They openly showed what was in their hearts before; a fixed enmity against Christ, and that truly they never had been indifferent as they appeared.

Heb. x. 37.—"For yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry." It cannot be justly inferred from these words, that the apostle expected Christ's last coming to judgment in that generation. All that could reasonably be understood by them is, that the time of their sufferings was short, and it would be but a little season before they would be wholly delivered from all their enemies, and should receive the recompense of the reward they hoped for. This appears by the context, and also by the obvious meaning of the place referred to in the Old Testament. If this and the next verse be compared with Hab. ii. 2, 3, 4, it will be manifest that the apostle refers to what is there said. The vision is for an appointed time, but in the end it shall speak and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry. Behold his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith. The thing that it is there said will come and will not tarry, is God's people's deliverance from the oppression of their enemies, especially from the Babylonish captivity; as appears by the context.

John v. 27.—"And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of Man." Christ is the more fitted to be the judge of men, for his being himself a man, one of the same race, having the same faculties, senses and organs, living in the same world under the same law, and in the midst of the same temptations. It tends to confirm the faith of the saints that their near kinsman and elder brother performed obedience for them, and wrought out the righteousness that they depend upon for justification in the judgment, and also suffered from the same unrighteous enemies; this tends to encourage and confirm their faith that he will vindicate them in the judgment, and plead their righteous cause against their unrighteous enemies.

Rom. viii. 23.—"And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." The apostle had been representing, in the preceding verses, that the whole creation was, as it were, in a state of travail, to bring to the birth, i. e., to bring the children of God into a state of liberty, happiness and glory. This in verse 19, he calls the manifestation of the sons of God, alluding to children's being brought forth to the light when they are born. This was to have its highest fulfilment at the resurrection, when they shall be born from the grave, and manifested in the most public manner in the proper glory of God's children, and shall receive the most public testimonies of God's fatherly love. Even in this present state, Christians, by

receiving the spirit, which is a filial spirit, a spirit of adoption, are brought forth, as the sons of God, and have the liberty and privileges of God's children in part. Yet it is but in part. They have only the first fruits of the spirit of adoption; and they themselves therefore join with the creation around them, groaning within themselves, waiting for the most glorious, the ultimate and perfect manifestation of the sons of God, when they shall be born from the grave.

Ephes. i. 18.—"The glory of his inheritance in the saints." It appears to me the true sense of this passage is, *his inheritance in heaven*. In the Greek it it, *εν τοις αγιοις*, which might have been literally translated, in the holy places; which if we suppose the apostle means heaven, would have been very agreeable to his way of speaking. In the next verse but one, where he evidently means *in heaven*, he expresses it thus, *εν επουρανιοις*, in the high. So in chap. ii. 6, 3, 10. In Heb. i. 3, he expresses it thus, *εν υψηλοις*, in the high. The same is expressed in Luke ii. 14, *εν υψιστοις*, in the highest. If it may thus be called the heavenly, the high, and the highest, it may as properly be called the holy. The land of Canaan was called the holy land, and the city Jerusalem the holy city; mount Zion the holy mountain, and the temple the holy place. And heaven is eminently the holy land, the holy city, mountain and temple.

Rom. vii. 25.—"With the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin." This Mr. Locke paraphrases thus: "To comfort myself therefore, as that state requires, for my deliverance from death, I myself, with full purpose, and sincere endeavors of mind, give up myself to obey the law of God; though my carnal inclinations are enslaved, and have a constant tendency to sin. This is all I can do, and this is all, I being under grace, that is required of me, and through Christ will be accepted." In his notes he observes, "I myself is in the original, *Αυτος εγω*, i. e. (says Mr. Locke), I the man, with all my full resolution of mind. *Αυτος* and *εγω* might both have been spared, if nothing more had been meant here than the nominative case to *δουλευω*," see note, verse 20. He observes again on the words, "*ον θελω εγω*, I would not, I in the Greek is very emphatical, as is obvious, and denotes the man, in that part wherein he is chiefly to be counted himself, and therefore with the like emphasis, verse 25, is called *Αυτος εγω*, I my own self." The apostle would doubtless intimate that when he, the saint, was himself, and acted himself, he served the law of God; and when he served the law of sin, he was as it were not himself, but led captive by an enemy. That is agreeable to verses 17, 20, and 22. These things plainly show that the apostle speaks in the name of a saint, and not in the name of a wicked man.

THEOLOGICAL QUESTIONS.

1. How does it appear that something has existed from eternity?

2. How does it appear that this earth and the visible system are not from eternity?

3. How does it appear that the existence of man is derived and dependent?

4. How do you prove the natural perfections of God, viz., his intelligence, infinite power, foreknowledge and immutability?

5. How do you prove his moral perfections, that he is a friend of virtue, or absolutely holy, true, just and good?

6. How do you prove that the Scriptures are a revelation from God? And what are the evidences, internal and external?

7. How do you prove the divine mission of Christ?

8. How do you prove the divinity of Christ?

9. How do you prove the personality and divinity of the Holy Ghost?

10. How do you prove that the persons in the Trinity are one God?

11. Whence arose the Manichean notion of two Gods, and how is it confuted?

12. Whence arose the polytheism of the Pagans, and how confuted?

13. Whence was it that the knowledge of the one true God, in which Noah was instructed, was not preserved among his posterity in all ages?

14. Why are not mankind in all ages (their internal faculties and external advantages being sufficient) united in right sentiments of the one true God?

15. Were the moral character of God and the moral law understood and loved, would there be any objections against revealed religion?

16. What is the true idea of God's decrees?

17. How do you prove absolute and particular election?

18. Did God decree the existence of sin?

19. Why did God decree sin?

20. In what sense did he introduce sin into the universe?

21. How do you reconcile this with the holiness and goodness of God?

22. What is necessary to constitute a moral agent?

23. Are men moral and free agents?

24. What is the difference between natural and moral power and inability?

25. How is absolute moral necessity, or inability, consistent with the free agency of men?

26. How is the doctrine of universal, absolute decrees, consistent with the free agency of men?

27. How do you prove a universal and special providence?

28. What is the covenant of redemption?

29. If man was created in original righteousness, how is that consistent with moral agency? It being said that a necessary holiness is no holiness.

30. What was the constitution under which Adam in innocency was placed?

31. Was Adam under the same necessity of falling that we are of sinning?

32. Are all intelligencies bound to love God supremely, sinners and devils?

33. Is the law holy, just and good, and how is it proved?

34. Are they, who are under its curse, bound to delight in it?

35. How great is the demerit of sin?

36. Are the torments of hell eternal?

37. How do you reconcile them with the justice and infinite goodness of God?

38. How do you reconcile them with those texts which say Christ died for all men, that God will not that any should perish?

39. How does it appear that human nature is originally depraved?

40. Whence comes that depravity?

41. How is it proved to be total?

42. What is the covenant of grace?

43. Are the law and gospel inconsistent with each other?

44. Why was an atonement, and one so precious as the blood of Christ necessary?

45. In what manner did Christ atone for sin?

46. To whom doth it belong to provide an atonement, God, or the sinner?

47. Did Christ redeem all men alike, elect and nonelect?

48 Can the offer of the gospel be made in sincerity to the nonelect?

49. How is redemption applied?

50. What is the office of the Holy Ghost in the work of redemption?

51. What is regeneration?

52. Whence arises the necessity of it?

53. What is true love to God?

54. What is true benevolence to men?

55. What is true repentance, and how distinguished from legal?

56. What is true faith?

57. What is pardon and justification? What is their foundation, and what is the influence of faith therein?

58. How are full satisfaction and free pardon consistent?

59. Is the sinner forgiven before he repents?

60. Is sanctifying grace needful at all to any man, unless with respect to that which is his duty, and in neglect of which he would be without excuse?

61. What is the sum of man's duty, and what the effect produced by the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit?

62. Can that holy volition in us, which is the effect of divine power, be wholly our act, or our duty?

63. How is it proved that unbelief is sin, and that all errors in moral matters are of a criminal nature?

64. Will the wicked Heathens, Jews, infidels, and errorists of every kind, be without excuse at the day of judgment?

65. What is the essence of true virtue, or holiness?

66. Is there no virtue in the exercise of natural conscience, the moral sense, natural compassion and generosity?

67. Is not self-love the root of all virtue?

68. Do not the unregenerate desire to be regenerated, and can they not properly pray for regenerating grace?

69. Do they not desire the heavenly happiness?

70. What is the utmost the unregenerate do in the use of the means of grace?

71. Is any duty done by them therein ?
72. Do they grow better in the use of means ?
73. To what are they to be exhorted ?
74. What is the real advantage of the assiduous use of means to the unregenerate ?
75. How do you prove that the institution of the Sabbath is of perpetual obligation ?
76. How is it that the Sabbath is changed from the seventh to the first day of the week ?
77. How do you prove that public worship is to be celebrated on the Sabbath ?
78. What is the foundation of the duty of prayer, since God is omniscient and immutable ?
79. How do you prove that family prayer is a duty ?
80. To whom are the promises of the gospel made, to the regenerate, or unregenerate ?
81. Are no encouragements given to the unregenerate ?
82. How do you prove the saints' perseverance ?
83. What is the nature of a Christian church ?
84. Who are fit for communion therein ?
85. What is the nature and import of baptism ?
86. How do you prove infant baptism ?
87. What is the nature of the Lord's Supper ?
88. What are the rules and end of church discipline ?
89 What is the character of a good minister of Christ ?
90. In what does the happiness of heaven consist ?

SIX OCCASIONAL SERMONS.

SERMON I.

THE CHURCH'S MARRIAGE TO HER SONS, AND TO HER GOD.

ISAIAH lxii. 4, 5.—Thy land shall be married. For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.

In the midst of many blessed promises that God makes to his church in this and the preceding and following chapters, of advancement to a state of great peace, comfort, honor and joy, after long continued affliction, we have the sum of all contained in these two verses. In the 4th verse God says to his church, "Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land, Beulah: for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married." When it is said, "Thy land shall be married," we are, by thy land, to understand "the body of thy people, thy whole race;" the land, by a metonymy very usual in Scripture, being put for the people that inhabit the land.

The 5th verse explains how this that is promised in the last words of verse 4, should be accomplished in two things, viz., *in being married to her sons*, and *married to her God*.

1. It is promised that she should be *married to her sons*, or that her sons should marry her: "For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee." Or, as the words might have been more literally translated from the original: "As a young man is married to a virgin, so shall thy sons be married to thee." Some by this understand a promise, that the posterity of the captivated Jews should return again from Babylon to the land of Canaan, and should be, as it were, married or wedded to their own land; i. e., they should be reunited to their own land, and should have great comfort and joy in it, as a young man in a virgin that he marries. But their thus interpreting the words seems to be through inadvertence; not carefully observing the words themselves, how that when it is said, "So shall thy sons marry thee," God does not direct his speech to the land itself, but to the church whose land it was; the pronoun *thee* being applied to the same mystical person in this former part of the verse, as in the words immediately following in the latter part of the same sentence, "And as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee." It is the church, and not the hills and valleys of the land of Canaan, that is God's bride, or the Lamb's wife. It is also manifest, that when God says, "So shall thy sons marry thee," he continues to speak to her to whom he had spoken in the three preceding verses; but there it is not the ground or soil of the land of Canaan, but the church, that he speaks to when he says, "The Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name. Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken," &c. And to represent the land itself as a bride, and the subject of espousals and marriage, would be a figure of speech very unnatural, and not known in Scripture; but for the church of God to be thus represented is very usual throughout the Scripture from the

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beginning to the end of the Bible. And then it is manifest that the return of the Jews to the land of Canaan from the Babylonish captivity, is not the event mainly intended by the prophecy of which these words are a part. The time of that return was not the time when that was fulfilled in the 2d verse of this chapter, "And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name." That was not the time spoken of in the two preceding chapters, with which this chapter is one continued prophecy. That was not the time spoken of in the last words of the foregoing chapter, when the Lord would cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all nations: nor was it the time spoken of in the 5th, 6th, and 9th verses of that chapter, when "strangers should stand and feed the flocks of God's people, and the sons of the alien should be their ploughmen, and vine dressers; but they should be named the priests of the Lord, and men should call them the ministers of God; when they should eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory boast themselves, and their seed should be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people; and all that should see them should acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed." Nor was that the time spoken of in the chapter preceding that, "when the abundance of the sea should be converted unto the church; when the isles should wait for God, and the ships of Tarshish to bring her sons from far, and their silver and gold with them; when the forces of the Gentiles and their kings should be brought; when the church should suck the milk of the Gentiles, and suck the breast of kings; and when that nation and kingdom that would not serve her should perish and be utterly wasted: and when the sun should be no more her light by day, neither for brightness should the moon give light unto her, but the Lord should be unto her an everlasting light, and her God her glory; and her sun should no more go down, nor her moon withdraw itself, because the Lord should be her everlasting light, and the days of her mourning should be ended." These things manifestly have respect to the Christian church in her most perfect and glorious state on earth in the last ages of the world; when the church should be so far from being confined to the land of Canaan, that she should fill the whole earth, and all lands should be alike holy.

So that the children of Israel's being wedded to the land of Canaan, being manifestly not the meaning of these words in the text, "As a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee," as some suppose; I choose rather, with others, to understand the words of the church's union with her faithful pastors, and the great benefits she should receive from them. God's ministers, though they are set to be the instructors, guides, and fathers of God's people, yet are also the sons of the church: Amos ii. 11, "I raised up of your sons for prophets, and of your young men for Nazarites." Such as these, when faithful, are those precious sons of Zion comparable to fine gold spoken of, Lam. iv. 2: spoken of again, verse 7: "Her Nazarites were purer than snow, they were whiter than milk." And as he that marries a young virgin becomes the guide of her youth; so these sons of Zion are represented as taking her by the hand as her guide: Isai. li. 18, "There is none to guide her among all the sons whom she hath brought forth: neither is there any that taketh her by the hand of all the sons that she hath brought up." That by these sons of the church is meant ministers of the gospel, is confirmed by the next verse to the text: "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem."

That the sons of the church should be married to her as a young man to a virgin, is a mystery or paradox not unlike many others held forth in the word

of God, concerning the relation between Christ and his people, and their relation to him and to one another; such as that Christ is David's Lord and yet his son, and both the root and offspring of David; that Christ is a son born and a child given, and yet the everlasting Father; that the church is Christ's mother, as she is represented, Cant. iii. 11, and viii. 1—and yet that she is his spouse, his sister, and his child; that believers are Christ's mother, and yet his sister and brother; and that ministers are the sons of the church, and yet that they are her fathers, as the apostle speaks of himself, as the father of the members of the church of Corinth, and also the mother of the Galatians, travailing in birth with them, Gal. iv. 19.

2. The second and chief fulfilment here spoken of, of that promise of the church's being married, is in her being married to Christ. "And as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee." Not that we are to understand that the church has many husbands, or that Christ is one husband, and ministers are other husbands that she hath: for though ministers are here spoken of as being married to the church, yet it is not as being his fellows or competitors, or as husbands of the church standing in a conjugal relation to his bride in any wise parallel with his: for the church has but one husband; she is not an adulteress, but a virgin, that is devoted wholly to the Lamb, and follows him whithersoever he goes. But ministers espouse the church entirely as Christ's ambassadors, as representing him and standing in his stead, being sent forth by him to be married to her in his name, that by this means she may be married to him. As when a prince marries a foreign lady by proxy, the prince's ambassador marries her, but not in his own name, but in the name of his master, that he may be the instrument of bringing her into a true conjugal relation to him. This is agreeable to what the apostle says, 2 Cor. xi. 2: "I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy; for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." Here the apostle represents himself as being, as it were, the husband of the church of Corinth; for it is the husband that is jealous when the wife commits adultery; and yet he speaks of himself as having espoused them not in his own name, but in the name of Christ, and for him and him only, and as his ambassador, sent forth to bring them home a chaste virgin to him. Ministers are in the text represented as married to the church in the same sense that elsewhere they are represented as fathers of the church: the church has but one father, even God, and ministers are fathers as his ambassadors; so the church has but one shepherd. John x. 16, "There shall be one fold and one shepherd;" but yet ministers, as Christ's ambassadors, are often called the church's shepherds or pastors. The church has but one Saviour; but yet ministers, as his ambassadors and instruments, are called her saviours. 1 Tim. iv. 16, "In doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee." Obad. 21, "And saviours shall come upon Mount Zion." The church has but one priest; but yet in Isai. lxvi. 21, speaking of the ministers of the Gentile nations, it is said, "I will take of them for priests and Levites." The church has but one Judge, for the Father hath committed all judgment to the Son; yet Christ tells his apostles, that they shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

When the text speaks first of ministers marrying the church, and then of Christ's rejoicing over her as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride; the former is manifestly spoken of as being in order to the latter, even in order to the joy and happiness that the church shall have in her true bridegroom. The preaching of the gospel is in this context spoken of three times agoing, as the great means of bringing about the prosperity and joy of the church; that is

foretold; once in the first verse, "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth;" and then again in the text, and lastly in the two following verses, "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence; and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth."

The text thus opened affords these two propositions proper for our consideration on the solemn occasion of this day.

I. The uniting of faithful ministers with Christ's people in the ministerial office, when done in a due manner, is like a young man's marrying a virgin.

II. This union of ministers with the people of Christ is in order to their being brought to the blessedness of a more glorious union, in which Christ shall rejoice over them, as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride.

I. The uniting of a faithful minister with Christ's people in the ministerial office, when done in a due manner, is like a young man's marrying a virgin.

I say, the uniting of a faithful minister with Christ's people, and in a due manner: for we must suppose that the promise God makes to the church in the text, relates to such ministers, and such a manner of union with the church; because this is promised to the church as a part of her latter day glory, and as a benefit that should be granted her by God, as the fruit of his great love to her, and an instance of her great spiritual prosperity and happiness in her purest and most excellent state on earth. But it would be no such instance of God's great favor and the church's happiness, to have unfaithful ministers entering into office in an undue and improper manner. They are evidently faithful ministers that are spoken of in the next verse, where the same are doubtless spoken of as in the text, "I have set watchmen on thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night." And they are those that shall be introduced into the ministry at a time of its extraordinary purity, order, and beauty, wherein (as is said in the first, second, and third verses) her righteousness should go forth as brightness, and the Gentiles should see her righteousness, and all kings her glory, and she should be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of her God.

When I speak of the uniting of a faithful minister with Christ's people in a due manner, I do not mean a due manner only with regard to external order; but its being truly done in a holy manner, with sincere, upright aims and intentions, with a right disposition, and proper frames of mind in those that are concerned; and particularly in the minister that takes the office, and God's people to whom he is united, each exercising in this affair a proper regard to God and one another.

Such a uniting of a faithful minister with the people of God in the ministerial office, is in some respect like a young man's marrying a virgin.

1. When a duly qualified person is properly invested with the ministerial character, and does in a due manner take upon him the sacred work and office of a minister of the gospel, he does, in some sense, espouse the church of Christ in general: for though he do not properly stand in a pastoral relation to the whole church of Christ through the earth, and is far from becoming a universal pastor; yet thenceforward he has a different concern with the church of Christ in general, and its interests and welfare, than other persons have that are laymen, and should be regarded otherwise by all the members of the Christian church. Wherever he is providentially called to preach the word of God, or minister in holy things, he ought to be received as a minister of Christ, and the messenger

of the Lord of Hosts to them. And every one that takes on him the office of a minister of Christ as he ought to do, espouses the church of Christ, as he espouses the interest of the church in a manner that is peculiar. He is under obligations, as a minister of the Christian church, beyond other men, to love the church, as Christ, her true bridegroom, hath loved her, and to prefer Jerusalem above his chief joy, and to imitate Christ, the great shepherd and bishop of souls and husband of the church, in his care and tender concern for the church's welfare, and earnest and constant labors to promote it, as he has opportunity. And as he, in taking office, devotes himself to the service of Christ in his church; so he gives himself to the church, to be hers, in that love, tender care, constant endeavor, and earnest labor for her provision, comfort, and welfare, that is proper to his office, as a minister of the church of Christ, by the permission of divine Providence, as long as he lives; as a young man gives himself to a virgin when he marries her. And the church of Christ in general, as constituted of true saints through the world, (though they do not deliver up themselves to any one particular minister, as universal pastor, yet) do cleave to, and embrace the ministry of the church with endeared affection and high honor, and esteem, for Christ's sake; and do joyfully commit and subject themselves to them to cleave to, honor, and help them, to be guided by them and obey them so long as in the world; as the bride doth in marriage cleave and deliver up herself to her husband. And the ministry in general, or the whole number of faithful ministers, being all united in the same work as fellow laborers, and conspiring to the same design as fellow helpers to the grace of God, may be considered as one mystical person, that espouses the church as a young man espouses a virgin. As the many elders of the church of Ephesus are represented as one mystical person, Rev. ii. 1, and all called the angel of the church of Ephesus; and as the faithful ministers of Christ in general, all over the world, seem to be represented as one mystical person, and called an angel: Rev. xiv. 6, "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell upon the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." But,

2. More especially is the uniting of a faithful minister with a particular Christian people, as their pastor, when done in a due manner, like a young man's marrying a virgin.

It is so with respect to the union itself, the concomitants of the union, and the fruits of it.

(1.) The union itself is, in several respects, like that which is between a young man and a virgin whom he marries.

It is so with respect to mutual regard and affection. A faithful minister, that is in a Christian manner united to a Christian people as their pastor, has his heart united to them in the most ardent and tender affection: and they, on the other hand, have their hearts united to him, esteeming him very highly in love for his works' sake, and receiving him with honor and reverence, and willingly subjecting themselves to him, and committing themselves to his care, as being, under Christ, their head and guide.

And such a pastor and people are like a young man and virgin united in marriage, with respect to the purity of their regard one to another. The young man gives himself to his bride in purity, as undebauched by meretricious embraces; and she also presents herself to him a chaste virgin. So in such a union of a minister and people as we are speaking of, the parties united are pure and holy in their affection and regard one to another. The minister's heart is united to the people, not for filthy lucre, or any worldly advantage, but with a pure

benevolence to them, and desire of their spiritual welfare and prosperity, and complacence in them as the children of God and followers of Christ Jesus. And, on the other hand, they love and honor him with a holy affection and esteem; and not merely as having their admiration raised, and their carnal affections moved by having their ears tickled, and their curiosity, and other fleshly principles, gratified by a florid eloquence, and the excellency of speech and man's wisdom; but receiving him as the messenger of the Lord of Hosts, coming to them on a divine and infinitely important errand, and with those holy qualifications that resemble the virtues of the Lamb of God.

And as the bridegroom and bride give themselves to each other in covenant; so it is in that union we are speaking of between a faithful pastor and a Christian people. The minister, by solemn vows, devotes himself to the people, to improve his time and strength, and spend and be spent for them, so long as God in his providence shall continue the union: and they, on the other hand, in a holy covenant commit the care of their souls to him, and subject themselves to him.

(2.) The union between a faithful minister and a Christian people, that we are speaking of, is like that between a young man and virgin in their marriage, with respect to the concomitants of it.

When such a minister and such a people are thus united, it is attended with great joy. The minister joyfully devoting himself to the service of his Lord in the work of the ministry, as a work that he delights in; and also joyfully uniting himself to the society of the saints that he is set over, as having complacence in them, for his dear Lord's sake, whose people they are; and willingly and joyfully, on Christ's call, undertaking the labors and difficulties of the service of their souls. And they, on the other hand, joyfully receiving him as a precious gift of their ascending Redeemer. Thus a faithful minister and a Christian people are each other's joy: Rom. xv. 32, "That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed." 2 Cor. i. 14, "As you have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye are ours."

Another concomitant of this union, wherein it resembles that which becomes a young man and virgin united in marriage, is mutual helpfulness, and a constant care and endeavor to promote each other's good and comfort. The minister earnestly and continually seeks the profit and comfort of the souls of his people, and to guard and defend them from every thing that might annoy them, and studies and labors to promote their spiritual peace and prosperity. They, on the other hand, make it their constant care to promote his comfort, to make the burden of his great and difficult work easy, to avoid those things that might add to the difficulty of it, and that might justly be grievous to his heart; and do what in them lies to encourage his heart, and strengthen his hand in his work; and are ready to say to him, when called to exert himself in the more difficult parts of his work, as the people of old to Ezra the priest, when they saw him bowed down under the burden of a difficult affair: Ezra x. 4, "Arise, for this matter belongeth to thee: we also will be with thee: be of good courage, and do it." They spare no pains nor cost to make their pastor's outward circumstances easy and comfortable, and free from pinching necessities and distracting cares, and to put him under the best advantages to follow his great work fully and successfully.

Such a pastor and people, as it is between a couple happily united in a conjugal relation, have a mutual sympathy with each other, a fellow feeling of each others' burdens and calamities, and a communion in each other's prosperity and

joy. When the people suffer in their spiritual interests, the pastor suffers: he is afflicted when he sees their souls in trouble and darkness: he feels their wounds; and he looks on their prosperity and comfort as his own. 2 Cor. xi. 29, "Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not?" 2 Cor. vii. 13, "We were comforted in your comfort." And, on the other hand, the people feel their pastor's burdens, and rejoice in his prosperity and consolations; see Phil. iv. 14, and 2 Cor. ii. 3.

(3.) This union is like that which is between a young man and a virgin in its fruits.

One fruit of it is mutual benefit: they become meet-helps one for another. The people receive great benefit by the minister, as he is their teacher to communicate spiritual instructions and counsels to them, and is set to watch over them to defend them from those enemies and calamities they are liable to; and so is, under Christ, to be both their guide and guard, as the husband is of the wife. And as the husband provides the wife with food and clothing; so the pastor, as Christ's steward, makes provision for his people, and brings forth out of his treasure things new and old, gives every one his portion of meat in due season, and is made the instrument of spiritually clothing and adorning their souls. And, on the other hand, the minister receives benefit from the people, and they minister greatly to his spiritual good by that holy converse to which their union to him as his flock leads them. The conjugal relation leads the persons united therein to the most intimate acquaintance and conversation with each other; so the union there is between a faithful pastor and a Christian people, leads them to intimate conversation about things of a spiritual nature: it leads the people most freely and fully to open the case of their souls to the pastor, and leads him to deal most freely, closely, and thoroughly with them in things pertaining thereto. And this conversation not only tends to their benefit, but also greatly to his.

And the pastor receives benefit from the people outwardly, as they take care of and order his outward accommodations for his support and comfort, and do, as it were, spread and serve his table for him.

Another fruit of this union, wherein it resembles the conjugal union, is a spiritual offspring. There is wont to arise from the union of such a pastor and people, a spiritual race of the children of the congregation that are new-born. These new-born children of God are in the Scripture represented both as the children of ministers, as those that have begotten them through the gospel, and also as the children of the church, who is represented as their mother that hath brought them forth, and at whose breasts they are nourished; as in Isaiah liv. 1, and lxvi. 11, Gal. iv. 26, 1 Pet. ii. 2, and many other places.

Having thus briefly shown how the uniting of faithful ministers with Christ's people in the ministerial office, when done in a due manner, is like a young man's marrying a virgin,

I proceed now to the

II. Proposition, viz., that this union of ministers with the people of Christ, is in order to their being brought to the blessedness of a more glorious union, in which Christ shall rejoice over them as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride.

1. The saints are, and shall be the subjects of this blessedness. Of all the many various kinds of union of sensible and temporal things that are used in Scripture to represent the relation there is between Christ and his church; that which is between bridegroom and bride, or husband and wife, is much the most frequently made use of both in the Old and New Testament. The Holy Ghost seems to take a peculiar delight in this, as a similitude fit to represent the strict,

intimate, and blessed union that is between Christ and his saints. The apostle intimates, that one end why God appointed marriage, and established so near a relation as that between husband and wife, was, that it might be a type of the union that is between Christ and his church, in Eph. v. 30, 31, 32: "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined to his wife; and they two shall be one flesh."—For this cause, i. e., because we are members of Christ's body, of his flesh, and of his bones: for this cause, God appointed that man and wife should be so joined together as to be one flesh, to represent this high and blessed union between Christ and his church: the apostle explains himself in the next words, "This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church." This institution of marriage, and making the man and his wife one flesh, is a great mystery; i. e., it contains in it a great mystery; that is, a great and glorious mystery hid in the design of it: and the apostle tells us what that glorious mystery is: "I speak concerning Christ and the church;" as much as to say, the mystery I speak of, is that blessed union that is between Christ and his church, which I spoke of before.

This union is a blessed union indeed; of which that between a faithful minister and a Christian people is but a shadow. Ministers are not the proper husbands of the church, though their union to God's people, as Christ's ambassadors, in several respects resembles the conjugal relation: but Christ is the true husband of the church, to whom the souls of the saints are espoused indeed, and to whom they are united as his flesh and his bones, yea, and one spirit; to whom they have given themselves in an everlasting covenant, and whom alone they cleave to, love, honor, obey, and trust in, as their spiritual husband, whom alone they reserve themselves for as chaste virgins, and whom they follow whithersoever he goeth. There are many ministers in the church of Christ, and there may be several pastors of one particular church: but the church has but one husband, all others are rejected and despised in comparison of him; he is among the sons as the apple tree among the trees of the wood; they all are barren and worthless, he only is the fruitful tree; and therefore, leaving all others, the church betakes herself to him alone, and sits under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit is sweet to her taste; she takes up her full and entire rest in him, desiring no other. The relation between a minister and people shall be dissolved, and may be dissolved before death: but the union between Christ and his church shall never be dissolved, neither before death nor by death, but shall endure through all eternity: "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but Christ's conjugal love and kindness shall not depart from his church; neither shall the covenant of his peace, the marriage covenant, be removed," Isa. liv. 10.—The union between a faithful minister and a Christian people is but a partial resemblance even of the marriage union, it is like marriage only in some particulars: but with respect to the union between Christ and his church, marriage is but a partial resemblance, yea, a faint shadow of that: every thing that is desirable and excellent in the union between an earthly bridegroom and bride, is to be found in the union between Christ and his church; and that in an infinitely greater perfection and more glorious manner: there is infinitely more to be found in it than ever was found between the happiest couple in a conjugal relation; or could be found if the bride and bridegroom had not only the innocence of Adam and Eve, but the perfection of angels.

Christ and his saints, standing in such a relation as this one to another, the saints must needs be unspeakably happy. Their mutual joy in each other is answerable to the nearness of their relation and strictness of their union. Christ

rejoices over the church as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, and she rejoices in him as the bride rejoices in the bridegroom. My text has respect to the mutual joy that Christ and his church should have in each other. For though the joy of Christ over his church only is mentioned, yet it is evident that this is here spoken of and promised as the great happiness of the church, and therefore supposes her joy in him.

The mutual joy of Christ and his church is like that of bridegroom and bride, in that they rejoice in each other, as those that they have chosen above others, for their nearest, most intimate, and everlasting friends and companions. The church is Christ's chosen: Isaiah xli. 9, "I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away:" chap. xlviii. 10, "I have chosen thee, in the furnace of affliction." How often are God's saints called his elect or chosen ones? He has chosen them, not to be mere servants, but friends: John xv. 15, "I call you not servants, but I have called you friends." And though Christ be the Lord of glory, infinitely above men and angels, yet he has chosen the elect to be his companions; and has taken upon him their nature; and so in some respect, as it were, levelled himself with them, that he might be their brother and companion. Christ as well as David, calls the saints his brethren and companions: Psalm cxxii. 8, "For my brethren and companions' sake I will now say, Peace be within thee." So in the book of Canticles, he calls his church his sister and spouse. Christ hath loved and chosen his church as his peculiar friend, above others: Psalm cxxxv. 4, "The Lord hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure." As the bridegroom chooses the bride for his peculiar friend, above all others in the world, so Christ has chosen his church for a peculiar nearness to him, as his flesh and his bone, and the high honor and dignity of espousals above all others, rather than the fallen angels, yea, rather than the elect angels. For verily, in this respect, "he taketh not hold of angels, but he taketh hold of the seed of Abraham;" as the words are in the original, in Heb. ii. 16. He has chosen his church above the rest of mankind, above all the Heathen nations, and those that are without the visible church, and above all other professing Christians: Cant. vi. 9, "My dove, my undefiled is but one; she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her." Thus Christ rejoices over his church, as obtaining in her that which he has chosen above all the rest of the creation, and as sweetly resting in his choice. Psal. cxxxii. 13, 14, "The Lord hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it. This is my rest forever."

On the other hand, the church chooses Christ above all others: he is in her eyes the chief among ten thousands, fairer than the sons of men: she rejects the suit of all his rivals for his sake: her heart relinquishes the whole world: he is her pearl of great price, for which she parts with all; and rejoices in him, as the choice and rest of her soul.

Christ and his church, like the bridegroom and bride, rejoice in each other, as having a special propriety in each other. All things are Christ's; but he has a special propriety in his church. There is nothing in heaven or earth, among all the creatures, that is his, in that high and excellent manner that the church is his: they are often called his portion and inheritance; they are said, Rev. xiv. 4, "to be the first fruits to God and the Lamb." As of old, the first fruit was that part of the harvest that belonged to God, and was to be offered to him; so the saints are the first fruits of God's creatures, being that part which is in a peculiar manner Christ's portion, above all the rest of the creation. James i. 18, "Of his own will begat he us by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures." And Christ rejoices in his church, as

in that which is peculiarly his: Isai. lxv. 19, "I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people." The church has also a peculiar propriety in Christ: though other things are hers, yet nothing is hers in that manner that her spiritual bridegroom is hers: as great and glorious as he is, yet he, with all his dignity and glory, is hers; all is wholly given to her, to be fully possessed and enjoyed by her, to the utmost degree that she is capable of: therefore we have her so often saying in the language of exultation and triumph, "My beloved is mine, and I am his," in the book of Canticles, chap ii. 16, and vi. 3, and vii. 10.

Christ and his church, like the bridegroom and bride, rejoice in each other, as those that are the objects of each other's most tender and ardent love. The love of Christ to his church is altogether unparalleled: the height and depth and length and breadth of it pass knowledge; for he loved the church, and gave himself for it; and his love to her proved stronger than death. And on the other hand, she loves him with a supreme affection: nothing stands in competition with him in her heart: she loves him with all her heart: her whole soul is offered up to him in the flame of love. And Christ rejoices and has sweet rest and delight in his love to the church. Zeph. iii. 17, "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty: he will save: he will rejoice over thee with joy: he will rest in his love: he will joy over thee with singing." So the church, in the exercises of her love to Christ rejoices with unspeakable joy. 1 Pet. i. 7, 8, "Jesus Christ; whom, having not seen, ye love: in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory."

Christ and his church rejoice in each other's beauty. The church rejoices in Christ's divine beauty and glory. She, as it were, sweetly solaces herself in the light of the glory of the Sun of righteousness; and the saints say one to another, as in Isai. ii. 5, "O house of Jacob, come ye, let us walk in the light of the Lord." The perfections and virtues of Christ are as a perfumed ointment to the church, that make his very name to be to her as ointment poured forth. Cant. i. 3, "Because of the savor of thy good ointments, thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee." And Christ delights and rejoices in the beauty of the church, and the beauty which he hath put upon her: her Christian graces are ornaments of great price in his sight, 1 Pet. iii. 4. And he is spoken of as greatly desiring her beauty, Psal. xlv. 11. Yea, he himself speaks of his heart as ravished with her beauty. Cant. iv. 9, "Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck."

Christ and his church, as the bridegroom and bride, rejoice in each other's love. Wine is spoken of, Psal. civ. 15, as that which maketh glad man's heart: but the church of Christ is spoken of as rejoicing in the love of Christ, as that which is more pleasant and refreshing than wine. Cant. i. 4, "The king hath brought me into his chambers: we will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine." So on the other hand, Christ speaks of the church's love as far better to him than wine. Cant. iv. 10, "How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse! How much better is thy love than wine!"

Christ and his church rejoice in communion with each other, as in being united in their happiness, and having fellowship and a joint participation in each other's good: as the bridegroom and bride rejoice together at the wedding feast, and as thenceforward they are joint partakers of each other's comforts and joys. Rev. iii. 20, "If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me." The church has fellowship with Christ in his own happiness, and his divine entertainments; his joy is ful-

filled in her, John xv. 11, and xvii. 13. She sees light in his light; and she is made to drink at the river of his own pleasures, Psal. xxxvi. 8, 9. And Christ brings her to eat and drink at his own table, to take her fill of his own entertainments. Cant. v. 1, "Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved." And he, on the other hand, has fellowship with her; he feasts with her; her joys are his; and he rejoices in that entertainment that she provides for him. So Christ is said to feed among the lilies, Cant. ii. 16, and chap. vii. 13; she speaks of all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old, which she had laid up for him; and says to him, chap. iv. 16, "Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruit." And he makes answer in the next verse, "I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse; I have gathered my myrrh with my spice, I have eaten my honey-comb with my honey, I have drunk my wine with my milk."

And lastly, Christ and his church, as the bridegroom and bride, rejoice in conversing with each other. The words of Christ, by which he converses with his church, are most sweet to her; and therefore she says of him, Cant. v. 16, "His mouth is most sweet." And on the other hand, he says of her, chap. ii. 14, "Let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice." And chap. iv. 11, "Thy lips, O my spouse, drop as the honey-comb: honey and milk are under thy tongue."

Christ rejoices over his saints as the bridegroom over the bride at all times: but there are some seasons wherein he doth so more especially. Such a season is the time of the soul's conversion; when the good shepherd finds his lost sheep, then he brings it home rejoicing, and calls together his friends and neighbors, saying, Rejoice with me. The day of a sinner's conversion is the day of Christ's espousals; and so eminently the day of his rejoicing. Canticles iii. 11, "Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart." And it is oftentimes remarkably the day of the saints' rejoicing in Christ: for then God turns again the captivity of his elect people, and, as it were, fills their mouth with laughter, and their tongue with singing; as in Psal. cxxvi. at the beginning. We read of the jailer, that when he was converted, he rejoiced, believing in God, with all his house," Acts xvi. 34.

And there are other seasons of special communion of the saints with Christ, wherein Christ doth in an especial manner rejoice over his saints, and as their bridegroom brings them into his chambers, that they also may be glad and rejoice in him, Cant. i. 4.

But the time wherein this mutual rejoicing of Christ and his saints will be in its perfection, is the time of the saints' glorification with Christ in heaven; for that is the proper time of the saints' entering in with the bridegroom into the marriage, Matt. xxv. 10. The saints' conversion is rather like the betrothing of the intended bride to her bridegroom before they come together; but the time of the saints' glorification is the time when that shall be fulfilled in Psal. xlv. 15, "With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought; they shall enter into the king's palace." That is the time when those that Christ loved, and gave himself for, that he might sanctify and cleanse them, as with the washing of water by the word, shall be presented to him in glory, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. The time wherein the church shall be brought to the full enjoyment of her bridegroom, having all tears wiped away from her eyes; and there shall be no more distance or absence. She shall then be brought to the entertainments of an eternal wedding feast, and to dwell eternally

with her bridegroom; yea, to dwell eternally in his embraces. Then Christ will give her his loves; and she shall drink her fill, yea, she shall swim in the ocean of his love.

And as there are various seasons wherein Christ and particular saints do more especially rejoice in each other; so there are also certain seasons wherein Christ doth more especially rejoice over his church collectively taken. Such a season is a time of remarkable outpouring of the Spirit of God: it is a time of the espousal of many souls to Christ; and so a time of much of the joy of espousals: and also it is a time wherein Christ is wont more especially to visit his saints with his loving-kindness, and to bring them near to himself, and especially to refresh their hearts with divine communications: on which account, such a time becomes a time of great joy to the church of Christ. So when the Spirit of God was so wonderfully poured out on the city of Samaria, with the preaching of Philip, we read that there was great joy in that city, Acts viii. 8. And the time of that wonderful effusion of the Spirit at Jerusalem, begun at the feast of Pentecost, was a time of holy feasting and rejoicing, and a kind of a wedding day to the church of Christ; wherein "they continuing daily, with one accord, in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness, and singleness of heart," as Acts ii. 46.

But more especially is the time of that great outpouring of the Spirit of God in the latter days, so often foretold in the Scriptures, represented as the time of the marriage of the Lamb, and of the rejoicing of Christ and his church in each other, as the bridegroom and the bride. This is the time prophesied of in our text and context; and this is the time foretold in Isai. lxv. 19, "I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people; and the voice of weeping shall no more be heard in her, nor the voice of crying." This is the time spoken of Rev. xix. 6, 7, 8, 9, where the apostle John tells us, he "heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." And adds, "To her was granted, that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb."

But above all, the time of Christ's last coming, is the time of the consummation of the church's marriage with the Lamb, and the time of the complete and most perfect joy of the wedding. In that resurrection morning, when the Sun of righteousness shall appear in our heavens, shining in all his brightness and glory, he will come forth as a bridegroom; he shall come in the glory of his Father, with all his holy angels. And at that glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, shall the whole elect church, complete as to every individual member, and each member with the whole man, both body and soul, and both in perfect glory, ascend up to meet the Lord in the air, to be thenceforth forever with the Lord. That will be a joyful meeting of this glorious bridegroom and bride indeed. Then the bridegroom will appear in all his glory without any veil: and then the saints will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father, and at the right hand of their Redeemer; and then the church will appear as the bride, the Lamb's wife. It is the state of the church after the resurrection, that is spoken of, Rev. xxi. 2: "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." And verse 9, "Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife." Then will come the time, when Christ will

sweetly invite his spouse to enter in with him into the palace of his glory, which he had been preparing for her from the foundation of the world, and shall, as it were, take her by the hand, and lead her in with him: and this glorious bridegroom and bride shall, with all their shining ornaments, ascend up together into the heaven of heavens; the whole multitude of glorious angels waiting upon them: and this son and daughter of God shall, in their united glory and joy, present themselves together before the Father; when Christ shall say, "Here am I, and the children which thou hast given me:" and they both shall, in that relation and union, together receive the Father's blessing; and shall thenceforward rejoice together, in consummate, uninterrupted, immutable, and everlasting glory, in the love and embraces of each other, and joint enjoyment of the love of the Father.

2. That forementioned union of faithful ministers with the people of Christ, is in order to this blessedness.

1. It is only with reference to Christ, as the true bridegroom of his church, that there is any union between a faithful minister and a Christian people, that is like that of a bridegroom and bride.

As I observed before, a faithful minister espouses a Christian people, not in his own name, but as Christ's ambassador. He espouses them, that in their being espoused to him, they may be espoused to Christ; and not that the church may commit adultery with him. It is for his sake that he loves her, with a tender conjugal affection, as she is the spouse of Christ, and as he, as the minister of Christ, has his heart under the influence of the Spirit of Christ; as Abraham's faithful servant, that was sent to fetch a wife for his master's son, was captivated with Rebekah's beauty and virtue; but not with reference to a union with himself, but with his master Isaac. It was for his sake he loved her, and it was for him that he desired her, and set his heart upon her, that she might be Isaac's wife. And it was for this that he greatly rejoiced over her, and for this he wooed her, and for this he obtained her, and she was for a season united to him; but it was but as a fellow traveller, that by him she might be brought to Isaac in the land of Canaan; and for this he adorned her with ornaments of gold; it was to prepare her for Isaac's embraces. All that tender care which a faithful minister takes of his people as a kind of spiritual husband, to provide for them, to lead and feed them, and comfort them, is not as looking upon them as his own bride, but his master's.

And on the other hand, the people receive him, and unite themselves to him in covenant, and honor him and subject themselves to him, and obey him, only for Christ's sake, and as one that represents him, and acts in his name towards them. All this love, and honor, and submission, is ultimately referred to Christ. Thus the apostle says, Gal. iv. 14, "Ye received me as an angel, or messenger of God, even as Christ Jesus." And the children that are brought forth in consequence of the union of the pastor and people, are not properly the minister's children, but the children of Christ; they are not born of man, but of God.

2. The things that appertain to that forementioned union of a faithful minister and Christian people, are the principal appointed means of bringing the church to that blessedness that has been spoken of. As Abraham's servant, and the part he acted as Isaac's agent towards Rebekah, were the principal means of his being brought to enjoy the benefits of her conjugal relation to Isaac. Ministers are sent to woo the souls of men for Christ: 2 Cor. v. 20, "We are then ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." We read in Matt.

xxii. of a certain king, that made a marriage for his son, and sent forth his servants to invite and bring in the guests. It is ministers that are these servants. The labors of faithful ministers are the principal means God is wont to make use of for the conversion of the children of the church, and so of their espousals unto Christ. I have espoused you to one husband, says the apostle, 2 Cor. xi. 2. The preaching of the gospel by faithful ministers, is the principal means that God makes use of for the exhibiting Christ and his love and benefits to his elect people, and the chief means of their being sanctified, and so fitted to enjoy their spiritual bridegroom. Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it, as by the washing of water by the word, i. e., by the preaching of the gospel, and so might present it to himself, a glorious church. The labors of faithful ministers are ordinarily the principal means of the joy of the saints in Christ Jesus, in their fellowship with their spiritual bridegroom in this world: 2 Cor. i. 24, "We are helpers of your joy." They are the instruments that God makes use of for the bringing up the church, as it were, from her childhood, till she is fit for her marriage with the Lord of glory; as Mordecai brought up Hadassah, or Esther, whereby she was fitted to be queen in Ahasuerus's court. God purifies the church under their hand, as Esther, to fit her for her marriage with the king, was committed to the custody of Hagai the keeper of the women, to be purified six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet odors. They are made the instruments of clothing the church in her wedding garments, that fine linen, clean and white, and adorning her for her husband; as Abraham's servant adorned Rebekah with golden earrings and bracelets. Faithful ministers are made the instruments of leading the people of God in the way to heaven, conducting them to the glorious presence of the bridegroom, to the consummate joys of her marriage with the Lamb; as Abraham's servant conducted Rebekah from Padan-aram to Canaan, and presented her to Isaac, and delivered her into his embraces. For it is the office of ministers, not only to espouse the church to her husband, but to present her a chaste virgin to Christ.

I would now conclude this discourse with some exhortations, agreeable to what has been said. And,

1. The exhortation may be to all that are called to the work of the gospel ministry. Let us who are honored by the glorious bridegroom of the church, to be employed as his ministers, to so high a purpose, as has been represented, be engaged and induced by what has been observed, to faithfulness in our great work; that we may be, and act towards Christ's people that are committed to our care, as those that are united to them in holy espousals, for Christ's sake, and in order to their being brought to the unspeakable blessedness of that more glorious union with the Lamb of God, in which he shall rejoice over them, as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride. Let us see to it that our hearts are united to them, as a young man to a virgin that he marries, in the most ardent and tender affection; and that our regard to them be pure and uncorrupt, that it may be a regard to them, and not to what they have, or any worldly advantages we hope to gain of them. And let us behave ourselves as those that are devoted to their good; being willing to spend and be spent for them; joyfully undertaking and enduring the labor and self-denial that is requisite in order to a thorough fulfilling the ministry that we have received; continually and earnestly endeavoring to promote the prosperity and salvation of the souls committed to our care; and, as those that are their bone and their flesh, looking on their calamities and their prosperity as our own; feeling their spiritual wounds and griefs, and refreshed with their consolations; and spending our whole lives in

diligent care and endeavor to provide for, nourish, and instruct our people, as the intended spouse of Christ, yet in her minority, that we may form her mind and behavior, and bring her up for him, and that we may cleanse her, as with the washing of water by the word, and purify her as with sweet odors, and clothed in such raiment as may become Christ's bride; that when the appointed wedding day comes, we may have done our work as Christ's messengers; and may then be ready to present Christ's spouse to him, a chaste virgin, properly educated and formed, and suitably adorned for her marriage with the Lamb; that he may then present her to himself, a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, and may receive her into his eternal embraces, in perfect purity, beauty, and glory.

Here I would mention three or four things tending to excite us to this fidelity.

1. We ought to consider how much Christ has done to obtain that joy that has been spoken of, in order to which we have been called to the work of the ministry, viz., that wherein Christ rejoices over his church, as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride.

The creation of the world seems to have been especially for this end, that the eternal Son of God might obtain a spouse towards whom he might fully exercise the infinite benevolence of his nature, and to whom he might, as it were, open and pour forth all that immense fountain of condescension, love, and grace that was in his heart, and that in this way God might be glorified. Doubtless the work of creation is subordinate to the work of redemption: that is called the creation of the new heavens and new earth, and is represented as so much more excellent than the old, that that, in comparison of it, is not worthy to be mentioned, or come into mind.

But Christ has done greater things than to create the world, to obtain his bride and the joy of his espousals with her: for he was incarnate, and became man for this end; which was a greater thing than his creating the world. For the Creator to make the creature was a great thing; but for him to become a creature was a greater thing. And he did a much greater thing still to obtain this joy; in that for this he laid down his life, and suffered even the death of the cross: for this he poured out his soul unto death; and he that is the Lord of the universe, God over all blessed for evermore, offered up himself a sacrifice, in both body and soul, in the flames of divine wrath. Christ obtains his elect spouse by conquest; for she was a captive in the hands of dreadful enemies; and her Redeemer came into the world to conquer these enemies, and rescue her out of their hands that she might be his bride: and he came and encountered these enemies in the greatest battle that ever was beheld by men or angels: he fought with principalities and powers; he fought alone with the powers of darkness, and all the armies of hell; yea, he conflicted with the infinitely more dreadful wrath of God, and overcame in this great battle; and thus he obtained his spouse. Let us consider at how great a price Christ purchased this spouse: he did not redeem her with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with his own precious blood; yea, he gave himself for her. When he offered up himself to God in those extreme labors and sufferings, this was the joy that was set before him, that made him cheerfully to endure the cross, and despise the pain and shame in comparison of this joy; even that rejoicing over his church, as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride that the Father had promised him, and that he expected when he should present her to himself in perfect beauty and blessedness.

The prospect of this was what supported him in the midst of the dismal

prospect of his sufferings, at which his soul was troubled; as appears by the account we have, John xii. 27: "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour." These words show the conflict and distress of Christ's holy soul in the view of his approaching sufferings. But in the midst of his trouble, he was refreshed with the joyful prospect of the success of those sufferings, in bringing home his elect church to himself, signified by a voice from heaven, and promised by the Father: on which he says, in the language of triumph, verse 31, 32, "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me."

And ministers of the gospel are appointed to be the instruments of bringing this to pass; the instruments of bringing home his elect spouse to him, and her becoming his bride; and the instruments of her sanctifying and cleansing by the word, that she might be meet to be presented to him on the future glorious wedding day. How great a motive then is here to induce us that are called to be these instruments, to be faithful in our work, and most willingly labor and suffer, that Christ may see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied? Shall Christ do such great things, and go through such great labors and sufferings to obtain this joy, and then honor us sinful worms, so as to employ us as his ministers and instruments to bring this joy to pass; and shall we be loth to labor, and backward to deny ourselves for this end?

2. Let us consider how much the manner in which Christ employs us in this great business has to engage us to a faithful performance of it. We are sent forth as his servants; but it is as highly dignified servants, as stewards of his household, as Abraham's servant; and as his ambassadors, to stand in his stead, and in his name, and represent his person in so great an affair as that of his espousals with the eternally beloved of his soul. Christ employs us not as mere servants, but as friends of the bridegroom; agreeable to the style in which John the Baptist speaks of himself, John iii. 29, in which he probably alludes to an ancient custom among the Jews at their nuptial solemnities, at which one of the guests that was most honored and next in dignity to the bridegroom, was styled *the friend of the bridegroom.*

There is not an angel in heaven, of how high an order soever, but what looks on himself honored by the Son of God and Lord of glory, in being employed by him as his minister in the high affair of his espousals with his blessed bride. But we are not only thus honored, but such an honor as this has Christ put upon us, that his spouse should in some sort be ours; that we should marry, as a young man marries a virgin, the same mystical person that he himself will rejoice over, as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride; that we should be his ministers to treat and transact for him with his dear spouse, that he might obtain this joy; and to transact in such a manner with her as in our treaty with her, to be married to her in his name, and sustain an image of his own endearing relation to her; and that she should receive us, in some sort, as himself, and her heart be united to us in esteem, honor, and affection, as those that represent him; and that Christ's and the church's children should be ours, and that the same that is the fruit of the travail of Christ's soul should be also the fruit of the travail of our souls; as the apostle speaks of himself as travailing in birth with his hearers, Gal. iv. 19. The reason why Christ puts such honor on faithful ministers, even above the angels themselves, is, because they are of his beloved church, they are select members of his dear spouse, and Christ esteems nothing too much for her, no honor too great for her. Therefore Jesus Christ, the King of angels and men, does as it were cause it to be proclaimed concerning faithful

ministers, as Ahasuerus did concerning him that brought up Esther, his beloved queen; "Thus shall it be done to the man that the king delights to honor."

And seeing Christ hath so honored us, that our relation to his people imitates his; surely our affection to them should resemble his, and we should imitate him in seeking their salvation, spiritual peace, and happiness, as Christ sought it. Our tender care, labors, self-denial, and readiness to suffer for their happiness, should imitate what hath appeared in him, that hath purchased them with his own blood.

3. Let it be considered, that if we faithfully acquit ourselves in our office, in the manner that hath been represented, we shall surely hereafter be partakers of the joy, when the bridegroom and bride shall rejoice in each other in perfect and eternal glory.

God once gave forth a particular command, with special solemnity, that it should be written for the notice of all professing Christians through all ages, that they are happy and blessed indeed, who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb: Rev. xix. 9, "And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God." But if we are faithful in our work, we shall surely be the subjects of that blessedness; we shall be partakers of the joy of the bridegroom and bride, not merely as friends and neighbors that are invited to be occasional guests, but as members of the one and the other. We shall be partakers with the church, the blessed bride, in her joy in the bridegroom, not only as friends and ministers to the church, but as members of principal dignity; as the eye, the ear, the hand, are principal members of the body. Faithful ministers in the church will hereafter be a part of the church that shall receive distinguished glory at the resurrection of the just, which, above all other times, may be looked on as the church's wedding day: Dan. xii. 2, 3, "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life; and they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever." They are elders that are represented as that part of the church triumphant that sit next to the throne of God: Rev. iv. 4, "And round about the throne were four and twenty seats; and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold."

And we shall also be partakers of the joy of the bridegroom in his rejoicing over his bride. We, as the special friends of the bridegroom, shall stand by the bridegroom, and hear him express his joy on that day, and rejoice greatly because of the bridegroom's voice; as John the Baptist said of himself, John iii. 29: "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice." Christ, in reward for our faithful service, in winning and espousing his bride to him, and bringing her up from her minority, and adorning her for him, will then call us to partake with him in the joy of his marriage. And she that will then be his joy, shall also be our crown of rejoicing. 1 Thess. ii. 19, "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?" What a joyful meeting had Christ and his disciples together, when the disciples returned to their Master, after the faithful and successful performance of their appointed service, when Christ sent them forth to preach the gospel: Luke x. 17, "And the seventy returned with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name." Here we see how they rejoice: the next words show how Christ also rejoiced on that occasion: "And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as light-

ning fall from heaven." And in the next verse but two, we are told that, "in that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." So if we faithfully acquit ourselves, we shall another day return to him with joy; and we shall rejoice with him and he with us. Then will be the day when Christ, that has sown in tears and in blood, and we that have reaped the fruits of his labors and sufferings, shall rejoice together agreeable to John iv. 35, 36, 37. And that will be a happy meeting indeed, when Christ and his lovely and blessed bride, and faithful ministers that have been the instruments of wooing and winning her heart to him, and adorning her for him, and presenting her to him, shall all rejoice together.

4. Further to stir us up to faithfulness in the great business that is appointed us, in order to the mutual joy of this bridegroom and bride, let us consider what reason we have to hope that the time is approaching when this joy shall be to a glorious degree fulfilled on earth, far beyond whatever yet has been; I mean the time of the church's latter day glory. This is what the words of our text have a more direct respect to; and this is what is prophesied of in Hos. ii. 19. 20: "And I will betroth thee unto me forever, yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord." And this is what is especially intended by the marriage of the Lamb, in Rev. xix.

We are sure this day will come: and we have many reasons to think that it is approaching; from the fulfilment of almost every thing that the prophecies speak of as preceding it, and their having been fulfilled now of a long time; and from the general earnest expectations of the church of God, and the best of her ministers and members, and the late extraordinary things that have appeared in the church of God, and appertaining to the state of religion, and the present aspects of Divine Providence, which the time will not allow me largely to insist upon.

As the happiness of that day will have a great resemblance of the glory and joy of the eternal wedding day of the church after the resurrection of the just; so will the privileges that faithful ministers shall be the subjects of at that time, much resemble the blessed privileges that they shall enjoy, as partaking with the bridegroom and bride, in their honor and happiness, in eternal glory. This is the time especially intended in the text, wherein it is said, "as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee." And it is after in the prophecies spoken of as a great part of the glory of that time, that then the church should be so well supplied with faithful ministers. So in the next verse to the text, "I have set watchmen on thy walls, O Jerusalem, that shall never hold their peace, day nor night." So, in Isai. xxx. 20, 21, "Thy teachers shall not be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers; and thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left." Jer. iii. 15, "And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." And chap. xxiii. 4, "And I will set up shepherds over them, which shall feed them." And the great privilege and joy of faithful ministers at that day is foretold in Isai. lii. 9: "Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice, with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion."

And as that day must needs be approaching, and we ourselves have lately seen some things that we have reason to hope are forerunners of it; certainly it should strongly excite us to endeavor to be such pastors as God has promised to

bless his church with at that time; that if any of us should live to see the dawning of that glorious day, we might share in the blessedness of it, and then be called, as the friends of the bridegroom, to the marriage supper of the Lamb, and partake of that joy in which heaven and earth, angels and saints, and Christ and his church, shall be united at that time.

But here I would apply the exhortation in a few words to that minister of Christ, who above all others is concerned in the solemnity of this day, who is now to be united to, and set over this people as their pastor.

You have now heard, Reverend Sir, the great importance, and high ends of the office of an evangelical pastor, and the glorious privileges of such as are faithful in this office, imperfectly represented. May God grant that your union with this people, this day, as their pastor, may be such, that God's people here may have the great promise God makes to his church in the text, now fulfilled unto them. May you now, as one of the precious sons of Zion, take this part of Christ's church by the hand, in the name of your great Master, the glorious bridegroom, with a heart devoted unto him with true adoration and supreme affection, and for his sake knit to this people, in a spiritual and pure love, and as it were a conjugal tenderness; ardently desiring that great happiness for them, which you have now heard Christ has chosen his church unto, and has shed his blood to obtain for her; being yourself ready to spend and be spent for them; remembering the great errand on which Christ sends you to them, viz., to woo and win their hearts, and espouse their souls to him, and to bring up his elect spouse, and to fit and adorn her for his embraces; that you may in due time present her a chaste virgin to him, for him to rejoice over, as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride. How honorable is this business that Christ employs you in! And how joyfully should you perform it! When Abraham's faithful servant was sent to take a wife for his master's son, how engaged was he in the business; and how joyful was he when he succeeded! With what joy did he bow his head and worship, and bless the Lord God of his master, for his mercy and his truth in making his way prosperous! And what a joyful meeting may we conclude he had with Isaac, when he met him in the field, by the well of Lahai-roi, and there presented his beauteous Rebekah to him, and told him all things that he had done! But this was but a shadow of that joy that you shall have, if you imitate his fidelity, in the day when you shall meet your glorious Master, and present Christ's church in this place, as a chaste and beautiful virgin unto him.

We trust, dear sir, that you will esteem it a most blessed employment, to spend your time and skill in adorning Christ's bride for her marriage with the Lamb, and that it is work that you will do with delight; and that you will take heed that the ornaments you put upon her are of the right sort, what shall be indeed beautiful and precious in the eyes of the bridegroom, that she may be all glorious within, and her clothing of wrought gold; that on the wedding day, she may stand on the King's right hand in gold of Ophir.

The joyful day is coming, when the spouse of Christ shall be led in unto the King with raiment of needle-work; and angels and faithful ministers will be the servants that shall lead her in. And you, sir, if you are faithful in the charge that is now to be committed to you, shall be joined with glorious angels in that honorable and joyful service; but with this difference, that you shall have the higher privilege. Angels and faithful ministers shall be together in bringing in Christ's bride into his palace, and presenting her to him: but faithful ministers shall have a much higher participation of the joy of that occasion: they shall have a greater and more immediate participation with the bride in

her joy; for they shall not only be ministers to the church as the angels are, but parts of the church, principal members of the bride. And as such, at the same time that angels do the part of ministering spirits to the bride, when they conduct her to the bridegroom, they shall also do the part of ministering spirits to faithful ministers. And they shall also have a higher participation with the bridegroom than the angels, in his rejoicing at that time; for they shall be nearer to him than they; for they are also his members, and are those that are honored as the principal instruments of espousing the saints to him, and fitting them for the enjoyment of him; and therefore they will be more the crown of rejoicing of faithful ministers, than of the angels of heaven.

So great, dear sir, is the honor and joy that is set before you, to engage you to faithfulness in your pastoral care of this people; so glorious the prize that Christ has set up to engage you to run the race that is set before you.

I would now conclude with a few words to the people of this congregation, whose souls are now to be committed to the care of that minister of Christ, whom they have chosen as their pastor.

Let me take occasion, dear brethren, from what has been said, to exhort you, not forgetting the respect, honor, and reverence, that will ever be due from you to your former pastor, that has served you so long in that work, but by reason of age and growing infirmities, and the prospect of his place being so happily supplied by a successor, has seen meet to relinquish the burden of the pastoral charge over you: I say, let me exhort you (not forgetting due respect to him as a father) to perform the duties that belong to you, in your part of that relation and union, now to be established between you and your elect pastor: to receive him as the messenger of the Lord of Hosts, one that in his office represents the glorious bridegroom of the church, to love and honor him, and willingly submit yourselves to him, as a virgin when married to a husband. Surely the feet of that messenger should be beautiful, that comes to you on such a blessed errand as that which you have heard, to espouse you to the eternal Son of God, and to fit you for, and lead you to him as your bridegroom. Your chosen pastor comes to you on this errand, and he comes in the name of the bridegroom, so empowered by him, and representing him, that in receiving him, you will receive Christ, and in rejecting him, you will reject Christ.

Be exhorted to treat your pastor as the beautiful and virtuous Rebekah treated Abraham's servant: she most charitably and hospitably entertained him, provided lodging and food for him and his company, and took care that he should be comfortably entertained and supplied in all respects, while he continued in his embassy; and that was the note or mark of distinction which God himself gave him, by which he should know the true spouse of Isaac from all others of the daughters of the city. Therefore in this respect approve yourselves as the true spouse of Christ, by giving kind entertainment to your minister that comes to espouse you to the antitype of Isaac. Provide for his outward subsistence and comfort, with the like cheerfulness that Rebekah did for Abraham's servant. You have an account of her alacrity and liberality in supplying him, in Gen. xxiv. 18, 19, 20, and 25. Say as her brother did, verse 31, "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord."

Thus you should entertain your pastor. But this is not that wherein your duty towards him chiefly lies: the main thing is to comply with him in his great errand, and to yield to the suit that he makes to you in the name of Christ, to go to be his bride. In this you should be like Rebekah: she was, from what she heard of Isaac, and God's covenant with him, and blessing upon him, from the mouth of Abraham's servant, willing forever to forsake her own country,

and her father's house, to go into a country she had never seen, to be Isaac's wife, whom also she never saw. After she had heard what the servant had to say, and her old friends had a mind she should put off the affair for the present, but it was insisted on that she should go immediately, and she was inquired of, "whether she would go with this man," she said, "I will go." And she left her kindred, and followed the man through all that long journey, till he had brought her unto Isaac, and they three had that joyful meeting in Canaan. If you will this day receive your pastor in that union that is now to be established between him and you, it will be a joyful day in this place, and the joy will be like the joy of espousals, as when a young man marries a virgin; and it will not only be a joyful day in East Hampton, but it will doubtless be a joyful day in heaven, on your account. And your joy will be a faint resemblance, and a forerunner of that future joy, when Christ shall rejoice over you as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, in heavenly glory.

And if your pastor be faithful in his office, and you hearken and yield to him in that great errand on which Christ sends him to you, the time will come, wherein you and your pastor will be each other's crown of rejoicing, and wherein Christ, and he, and you, shall all meet together at the glorious marriage of the Lamb, and shall rejoice in and over one another, with perfect, uninterrupted, never ending and never fading joy.

SERMON II.*

THE TRUE EXCELLENCY OF A GOSPEL MINISTER.

JOHN v. 35.—He was a burning and a shining light.

THAT discourse of our blessed Saviour we have an account of in this chapter from the 17th verse to the end, was occasioned by the Jews' murmuring against him, and persecuting him for his healing the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda, and bidding him take up his bed and walk on the Sabbath day. Christ largely vindicates himself in this discourse, by asserting his fellowship with God the Father in nature and operations, and thereby implicitly showing himself to be the Lord of the Sabbath, and by declaring to the Jews that God the Father, and he with him, did *work hitherto*, or even to this time; i. e., although it be said that God rested on the seventh day from all his works, yet indeed God continues to work hitherto, even to this very day, with respect to his greatest work, the work of redemption, or new creation, which he carries on by Jesus Christ, his Son. Pursuant to the designs of which work was his showing mercy to fallen men by healing their diseases, and delivering them from the calamities they brought on themselves by sin. This great work of redemption, God carries on from the beginning of the world to this time; and his rest from it will not come till the resurrection, which Christ speaks of in the 21st and following verses: the finishing of this redemption as to its procurement, being in his own resurrection; and as to the application, in the general resurrection and eternal judgment, spoken of from verse 20 to verse 30. So that notwithstanding both the rest on the seventh day, and also the rest that Joshua gave the children of Israel, in Canaan; yet the great rest of the Redeemer from his work, and so of his people with him and in him, yet remains, as the apostle observes, Heb. chap. iv. This will be at the resurrection and general judgment; which Christ here teaches the Jews, was to be brought to pass by the Son of God, by the Father's appointment, and so the works of God to be finished by him.

And inasmuch as this vindication was so far from satisfying the Jews, that it did but further enrage them, because hereby he made himself equal with God, Christ therefore refers them to the witness of John the Baptist; whose testimony they must acquiesce in, or else be inconsistent with themselves; because they had generally acknowledged John to be a great prophet, and seemed for a while mightily affected and taken with it, that God, after so long a withholding the spirit of prophecy, had raised up so great a prophet among them—and it is concerning him that Christ speaks in this verse wherein is the text: "He was a burning and a shining light; and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light."

In order to a right understanding and improvement of the words of the text, we may observe,

1. What Christ here takes notice of in John, and declares concerning him, viz., that *he was a burning and a shining light.* He was a light to the church of Israel, to reveal the mind and will of God to them, after a long continued

* Preached at Pelham, August 30, 1744, at the ordination of the Rev. Mr. Robert Abercrombie to the work of the gospel ministry in that place.

dark season, and after they had been destitute of any prophet to instruct them, for some ages: he arose on Israel, as the morning star, the forerunner of the sun of righteousness, to introduce the day-spring, or dawning of the gospel-day, to give light to them that till then had sat in the darkness of perfect night, which was the shadow of death; to give them the knowledge of salvation; as Zacharias his father declares at his circumcision, Luke i. 76—79: "And thou child shalt be called the Prophet of the Highest; for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord, to prepare his ways; to give knowledge of salvation unto his people, by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."

And he was a burning light, as he was full of a spirit of fervent piety and holiness, being filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb, having his heart warmed and inflamed with a great love to Christ, being that *friend of the bridegroom, that stood and heard him, and rejoiced greatly because of the bridegroom's voice;* and was glad that Christ increased, though he decreased, John iii. 29, 30. And was animated with a holy zeal in the work of the ministry: he came in this respect, in the spirit and power of Elias; as Elias was zealous in bearing testimony against the corruption, apostacies, and idolatries of Israel in his day, so was John the Baptist in testifying against the wickedness of the Jews in his day: as Elias zealously reproved the sins of all sorts of persons in Israel, not only the sins of the common people, but of their great ones, Ahab, Ahaziah, and Jezebel, and their false prophets; with what zeal did John the Baptist reprove all sorts of persons, not only the publicans and soldiers, but the Pharisees and Sadducees, telling them plainly that they were a generation of vipers, and rebuked the wickedness of Herod in his most beloved lust, though Herod sought his life for it, as Ahab and Ahaziah did Elijah's. As Elias was much in warning the people of God's approaching judgments, denouncing God's awful wrath against Ahab, Jezebel and Ahaziah, and the prophets of Baal, and the people in general: so was John the Baptist, much in warning the people to fly from the wrath to come, telling them in the most awakening manner, that the "axe was laid at the root of the tree, and that every tree that brought not forth good fruit should be hewn down and cast into the fire, and that he that came after him had his fan in his hand, and that he would thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner, and burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

John the Baptist was not only a burning, but a shining light: he was so in his doctrine, having more of the gospel in his preaching than the former prophets, or at least the gospel exhibited with greater light and clearness, more plainly pointing forth the person that was to be the great Redeemer, and declaring his errand into the world, to take away the sin of the world, as a Lamb offered in sacrifice to God, and the necessity that all, even the most strictly moral and religious, stood in of him, being by nature a generation of vipers; and the spiritual nature of his kingdom, consisting not in circumcision, or outward baptism, or any other external performance or privileges, but in the powerful influences of the Holy Ghost in their hearts, a being *baptized with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.*

In this clearness with which he gave knowledge of salvation to God's people, John was a bright light, *and among them that had been born of women there had not arisen a greater than he.* In this brightness this harbinger of the gospel-day excelled all the other prophets, as the morning star reflects

more of the light of the sun than any other star, and is the brightest of all the stars.

He also shone bright in his conversation, and his eminent mortification and renunciation of the enjoyments of the world; his great diligence and laboriousness in his work, his impartiality in it, declaring the mind and will of God to all sorts without distinction; his great humility, rejoicing in the increase of the honor of Christ, though his honor was diminished, as the brightness of the morning star diminishes, as the light of the sun increases; and in his faithfulness and courage, still declaring the mind and will of God, though it cost him his own life. Thus his light shone before men.

2. We may observe to what purpose Christ declares these things of John in the text, viz., to show how great and excellent a person he was, and worthy that the Jews should regard his testimony: great are the things which Christ elsewhere says of John the Baptist, as in Matt. xi. 7—14. He speaks of him as a *prophet; and more than a prophet;* and one, *than whom there had not risen a greater among them that had been born of women.* He observed how great and excellent a light he was in the text, to show the Jews how inexcusable they were in not receiving the testimony he had given of him; as you may see, verses 31, 32, 33.

Therefore that which I would observe from the text to be the subject of my present discourse is this:

It is the excellency of a minister of the gospel to be both a burning and a shining light.

Thus we see it is in Christ's esteem, the great prophet of God, and light of the world, head of the church, and Lord of the harvest, and the great Lord and master whose messengers all ministers of the gospel are.

John the Baptist was a minister of the gospel; and he was so more eminently than the ancient prophets; for though God at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake the gospel by them; yet John the Baptist was a great minister of the gospel in a manner distinguished from them: he is reckoned in Scripture the first that introduced the gospel day, after the law and the prophets: Luke vi. 16, "The law and the prophets were until John; since that time the kingdom of God is preached." And his preaching is called the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God, Mark i. 1. He came on that errand, to give knowledge of salvation to God's people, through the remission of their sins (as his father Zacharias observes, Luke i. 77); and to preach these glad tidings, that the kingdom of heaven was at hand.

John being thus eminently a minister of the gospel, and a burning and shining light, being taken notice of by Christ as his great excellency, we may justly hence observe, that herein consists the proper excellency of ministers of the gospel.

I would, by divine assistance, handle the subject in the following method.

I. I would show that Christ's design, in the appointment of the order and office of ministers of the gospel is, that they may be lights to the souls of men.

II. I would show what is implied in their being burning lights.

III. I would show what is implied in their being shining lights.

IV. I would show that it is the proper excellency of ministers of the gospel to have these things united in them, to be both burning and shining lights.

V. I would apply these things to all that Christ has called to the work of the gospel ministry, showing how much it concerns them earnestly to endeavor that they may be burning and shining lights.

VI. Show what ministers of the gospel ought to do that they may be so.

VII. Say something briefly concerning the duty of a people that are under the care of a gospel minister, correspondent to those things that Christ has taught us concerning the end and excellency of a gospel minister.

I. I would observe that Christ's design in the appointment of the order and office of ministers of the gospel was that they might be lights to the souls of men.

Satan's kingdom is a kingdom of darkness; the devils are the rulers of the darkness of this world. But Christ's kingdom is a kingdom of light; the designs of his kingdom are carried on by light; his people *are not of the night, nor of darkness*, but are *the children of the light*, as they are the children of God, who is *the Father of lights*, and as it were a boundless fountain of infinitely pure and bright light, 1 John i. 5, James i. 17.

Man by the fall extinguished that divine light that shone in this world in its first estate. The Scripture represents the wickedness of man as reducing the world to that state wherein it was when it was yet without form and void, and darkness filled it. Jer. iv. 22, 23, "For my people is foolish, they have not known me: they are sottish children; and they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil; but to do good they have no knowledge. I beheld the earth, and lo, it was without form and void; and the heavens, and they had no light." But God in infinite mercy has made glorious provision for the restoration of light to this fallen dark world; he has sent him who is the brightness of his own glory, into the world, to be the light of the world. "He is the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world," i. e., every man in the world that ever has any true light. But in his wisdom and mercy, he is pleased to convey his light to men by means and instruments; and has sent forth his messengers, and appointed ministers in his church to be subordinate lights, and to shine with the communications of his light, and to reflect the beams of his glory on the souls of men.

There is an analogy between the divine constitution and disposition of things in the natural and in the spiritual world. The wise Creator has not left the natural world without light; but in this our solar system has set one great light, immensely exceeding all the rest, shining perpetually with a transcendent fulness and strength, to enlighten the whole; and he hath appointed other lesser, subordinate or dependent lights, that shine with the communications and reflections of something of his brightness. So it is in the spiritual world; there God hath appointed Jesus Christ as a Sun of righteousness: the Church of God has not the sun to be her light by day; nor for brightness, does the moon give light to her, but the Lord is her everlasting light, and her God her glory. The new Jerusalem has no need of the sun, nor the moon; for the Lamb is the light thereof. And the ministers of Christ are, as it were, the stars that encompass this glorious fountain of light, to receive and reflect his beams, and give light to the souls of men. As Christ therefore is in Scripture called the sun, so are his ministers called stars. So are the twelve apostles, the chief ministers of the Christian church, called, Rev. xii. 1: "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars." And so are the ordinary ministers of the gospel called, Rev. i. 16: "And he had in his right hand seven stars." And verse 20, "The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand and the seven golden candlesticks; the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches." Here also ministers of the gospel are implicitly compared to those lamps that enlightened the temple at Jerusalem, upon the tops of the golden

candlesticks; and more expressly in Zech. iv. 2: "I have looked, and behold a candlestick, all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon."

These lamps have all their oil from Christ, and are enkindled by his flames, and shine by his beams; and being thus dependent on him, they are near to him, and held in his right hand, that they may receive light from him, to communicate to others.

The use of a light is threefold; to discover, to refresh, and to direct.

The first use of a light is to discover things, or make them manifest. Without light nothing is to be seen. Eph. v. 13, "Whatsoever doth make manifest is light." Ministers are set to be lights to the souls of men in this respect, as they are to be the means of imparting divine truth to them, and bringing into their view the most glorious and excellent objects, and of leading them to, and assisting them in the contemplation of those things that angels desire to look into; the means of their obtaining that knowledge is infinitely more important and more excellent and useful, than that of the greatest statesmen or philosophers, even that which is spiritual and divine: they are set to be the means of bringing men out of darkness into God's marvellous light, and of bringing them to the infinite fountain of light, that in his light they may see light: they are set to instruct men, and impart to them that knowledge by which they may know God and Jesus Christ, whom to know is life eternal.

Another use of light is to refresh and delight the beholders. Darkness is dismal: the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is to behold the sun. Light is refreshing to those who have long sat in darkness: they therefore that watch and keep awake through a dark night, long and wait for the light of the morning; and the wise man observes, Prov. xv. 30, that "the light of the eyes rejoiceth the heart." Spiritual light is especially refreshing and joyful. Psalm xcvii. 11, "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart." They that see the light of Christ, the star that hath arisen out of Jacob, are refreshed and do rejoice, as the wise men that saw the star that showed them where Christ was: Matt. ii. 10, "And when they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy."

Ministers are set in the church of God to be the instruments of this comfort and refreshment to the souls of men, to be the instruments of leading souls to the God of all consolation, and fountain of their happiness: they are sent as Christ was, and as co-workers with him, to preach good tidings to the meek, to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, and to comfort all that mourn: they are to lead those that "labor, and are heavy laden" to their true rest, and to speak a word in season to him that is weary: they are set to be ministers of the consolation and joy of the saints. 2 Cor. i. 24, "We have not dominion over your faith; but are helpers of your joy."

The third use of light is to direct. 'Tis by light that we see where to go: "he that walks in darkness knows not whither he goes," and is in danger of stumbling and falling into mischief. 'Tis by light that men see what to do, and are enabled to work; in the night, Christ tells us no man can work. Ministers are set to be lights to men's souls in this respect also; as Zacharias observes of John the Baptist, Luke i. 79, "To guide our feet in the way of peace." Ministers have the record of God committed to them that they may hold that forth, which God has given to be to man as a light shining in a dark place, to guide them in the way through this dark world, to regions of eternal light Ministers are set to be the instruments of conveying to men that true wisdom

spoken of, Job 28, " which cannot be gotten for gold, nor shall silver be weighed for the price thereof; which cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire."

I proceed now to the

II. Thing proposed, viz., to show what is implied in a minister of the gospel's being a burning light.

There are these two things that seem naturally to be understood by this expression, viz., that his heart be filled with much of the holy ardor of a spirit of true piety; and that he be fervent and zealous in his administrations.

1. That his heart be full of much of the holy ardor of a spirit of true piety. We read of the power of godliness. True grace is no dull, inactive, ineffectual principle; it is a powerful thing; there is an exceeding energy in it; and the reason is, that God is in it; it is a divine principle, a participation of the divine nature, and a communication of divine life, of the life of a risen Saviour, who exerts himself in the hearts of the saints, after the power of an endless life. They that have true grace in them, *they live;* but not by their own life; *but Christ lives in them:* his Holy Spirit becomes in them a living principle and spring of divine life: the energy and power of which is in Scripture compared to fire. Matt. iii. 11: " I indeed baptize you with water; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." True piety is not a thing remaining only in the head, or consisting in any speculative knowledge or opinions, or outward morality, or forms of religion; it reaches the heart, is chiefly seated there, and burns there. There is a holy ardor in every thing that belongs to true grace: true faith is an ardent thing, and so is true repentance; there is a holy power and ardor in true spiritual comfort and joy; yea, even in true Christian humility, submission and meekness. The reason is, that divine love or charity is the sum of all true grace, which is a holy flame enkindled in the soul: it is by this therefore especially, that a minister of the gospel is a *burning light*: a minister that is so, has his soul enkindled with the heavenly flame; his heart burns with love to Christ, and fervent desires of the advancement of his kingdom and glory; and also with ardent love to the souls of men, and desires for their salvation.

2. The inward holy ardor of his soul is exercised and manifested in his being *zealous and fervent in his administrations:* for he is a *burning light;* which implies that his spiritual heat and holy ardor is not for himself only, but is communicative, and for the benefit of others: he is ardent, as he is *a light*, or in the performance of the duties of that office wherein he is set to be a light in the church of Christ. His fervent zeal, which has its foundation and spring in that holy and powerful flame of love to God and man, that is in his heart, appears in the fervency of his prayers to God, for and with his people; and in the earnestness and power with which he preaches the word of God, declares to sinners their misery, and warns them to fly from the wrath to come, and reproves, and testifies against all ungodliness; and the unfeigned earnestness and compassion with which he invites the weary and heavy laden to their Saviour; and the fervent love with which he counsels and comforts the saints; and the holy zeal, courage and steadfastness, with which he maintains the exercise of discipline in the house of God, notwithstanding all the opposition he meets with in that difficult part of the ministerial work; and in the diligence and earnestness with which he attends every duty of his ministerial function, whether public or private.

But I hasten to the

III. Thing proposed in the handling of this subject, viz., to show what is implied in a minister's being a *shining light.*

There are three things that seem to be naturally signified by it.

1. That he be *pure, clear, and full in his doctrine.* A minister is set to be a light to men's souls, by teaching, or doctrine: and if he be a shining light in this respect, the light of his doctrine must be bright and full; it must be pure without mixture of darkness: and therefore he must be sound in the faith, not one that is of a reprobate mind; in doctrine he must show uncorruptness; otherwise his *light* will be darkness: he must not lead his people into errors, but teach them the truth only, guiding their feet into the way of peace, and leading them in the right ways of the Lord.

He must be one that is *able to teach*, not one that is raw, ignorant, or unlearned, and but little versed in the things that he is to teach others; *not a novice*, or one that is *unskilful in the word of righteousness;* he must be one that is well studied in divinity, well acquainted with the written word of God, mighty in the Scriptures, and able to instruct and convince gainsayers.

And in order to be a *shining light* he must be one that really knows what religion is, one that is truly acquainted with that Saviour and way of salvation, that he is to teach to others, that he may *speak the things that he knows, and testify the things that he has seen*, and not be a blind leader of the blind: he must be one that is acquainted with experimental religion, and not ignorant of the inward operations of the Spirit of God, nor of Satan's devices; able to guide souls under their particular difficulties. Thus he must be *a scribe well instructed in things that pertain to the kingdom of God;* one *that brings forth out of his treasures, things new and old.*

And in order to his being a *shining light*, his doctrine must be *full*, he must not only be able to teach, but apt to teach, ready to instruct the ignorant, and them that are out of the way, and diligent in teaching, in public and private; and careful and faithful to declare the whole counsel of God, and not keep back any thing that may be profitable to his hearers.

Also his being a *shining light* implies that his instructions are clear and plain, accommodated to the capacity of his hearers, and tending to convey light to their understandings.

2. Another thing requisite in order to a minister's being a *shining light*, is that he be *discreet in all his administrations.* The fervent zeal that thus should animate and actuate him in his administrations should be regulated by discretion: he should not only be knowing, and able to communicate knowledge and formed to do it; but also wise, and know how to conduct himself in the house of God, as a wise builder, and a wise steward. And as he is one that God hath sent forth to labor in his field, and committed the care of his vineyard to, so he should conduct himself there as one *whom his God doth instruct to discretion:* he should not only be as *harmless as a dove*, but as *wise as a serpent;* showing himself a *workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth;* and one that *knows how to govern the church of God*, and to *walk in wisdom towards those that are without.*

3. Another thing implied in a minister's being a *shining light*, is that he *shines in his conversation:* if he shines never so much in his doctrine and administrations in the house of God, yet if there be not an answerable brightness in his conversation, it will have a tendency to render all ineffectual. Christ, in Matt. v. 14, 15, 16, says to his disciples (having undoubtedly a special respect to those of them that were to be sent forth to preach the gospel), "Ye are the light of the world:—men do not light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, and it giveth light unto all that are in the house." And how does Christ direct them to give light to others? "Let your light," says he, "so

shine before men, that others seeing your *good works*, may glorify your Father which is in heaven." And he tells the same disciples again, John xv. 8, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." And how should they bring forth fruit? Christ tells them, verse 10, "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love," and verse 14, "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you."

God sent his Son into the world to be the light of the world these two ways, viz., by revealing his mind and will to the world, and also by setting the world a perfect example. So ministers are set to be lights, not only as teachers, but as ensamples to the flock, 1 Peter v. 3.

The same things that ministers recommend to their hearers in their doctrine, they should also show them an example of in their practice. Thus the apostle says to Timothy, 1 Tim. iv. 11, "These things command and teach;" and then adds in the next verse, "Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." So he directs Titus, in his teaching, to recommend sobriety, gravity, temperance, patience, and other virtues, in the beginning of the 2d chapter of Titus. But then adds in the 7th verse, "In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works."

We see in natural bodies, that when heat is raised in them to a high degree, at length they begin to shine: and, as I observed before, a principle of true grace in the soul is like an inward heat, a holy ardor of a heavenly fire enkindled in the soul: this in ministers of the gospel ought to be to that degree, as to shine forth brightly in all their conversation; and there should as it were be a light about them wherever they go, exhibiting to all that behold them, the amiable, delightful image of the beauty and brightness of their glorious master.

I proceed to the

IV. Thing proposed, which is to show that the excellency of a minister of the gospel consists in his being thus *both a burning and a shining light.*

This is manifest in two things:

1. Herein his ministry is acceptable and amiable in the sight of God and men.

When light and heat are thus united in a minister of the gospel, it shows that each is genuine, and of a right kind, and that both are divine. Divine light is attended with heat; and so, on the other hand, a truly divine and holy heat and ardor is ever accompanied with light.

It is the glory of the sun that such a bright and glorious light, and such a powerful, refreshing, vivifying heat, are both together diffused from that luminary. When there is light in a minister, consisting in human learning, great speculative knowledge and the wisdom of this world, without a spiritual warmth and ardor in his heart, and a holy zeal in his ministrations, his light is like the light of an *ignis fatuus*, and some kinds of putrifying carcasses that shine in the dark, though they are of a stinking savor. And if on the other hand a minister has warmth and zeal, without light, his heat has nothing excellent in it, but is rather to be abhorred; being like the heat of the bottomless pit; where, though the fire be great, yet there is no light. To be hot in this manner, and not lightsome, is to be like an angel of darkness. But ministers by having light and heat united in them, will be like the angels of light; which for their light and brightness are called morning stars. Job xxviii. 7, "When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." And because of that holy ardor of divine love and zeal with which they burn, they are compared to a flaming fire: Psal. civ. 4, "Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flaming fire," and are therefore called seraphims, which is a word

that is derived from a root that signifies *to burn.* So that by ministers of the gospel being *burning and shining lights,* the *angels of the churches* will become like the *angels of heaven,* and those stars held in the right hand of Christ here below, will be like those morning stars above, and which is much more, hereby ministers will be like their glorious Lord and Master; who is not only the Master of ministers of the gospel, but is the head and Lord of the glorious angels, whom they adore, and who communicates to them the brightness in which they shine, and the flame with which they burn, and is the glorious luminary and sun of the heavenly world, from whence all the inhabitants of that world have their light and life, and all their glory. In this Sun of righteousness is that light, whose brightness is such that the light of the sun in the firmament in comparison of it is as darkness, yea, *black as sackcloth of hair:* for he is the infinite brightness of God's glory; and of him it is said, Isai. xxiv. 23, "Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of Hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, before his ancients, gloriously." And accompanying this bright light in him, is the infinitely intense flame of love. There is no love to be compared to his; nor ever was love both to God and man so manifested, as has been in what Christ has done and suffered; for *herein was love!* Ministers, by being burning and shining lights, become the sons of God, of whom we read that he *is light,* and that he *is love.* 1 John i. 5, "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that *God is light,* and in him is no darkness at all." And chap. iv. 16, "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us: *God is love,* and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him."

Therefore it must needs be that ministers, by being burning and shining lights, are acceptable and amiable in the sight of God, as he delights in his own image and in the image of his Son: and hereby also they will be honorable and amiable in the sight of men, all such as have any sense of that which is truly excellent and beautiful; and it is the way to have their ministry pleasant and delightful to those of this character that sit under it.

2. Herein a minister of the gospel will be likely to answer the ends of his ministry: by this means his ministry will not only be amiable, but profitable. If a minister has light without heat, and entertains his auditory with learned discourses, without a savor of the power of godliness, or any appearance of fervency of spirit, and zeal for God and the good of souls, he may gratify itching ears, and fill the heads of his people with empty notions; but it will not be very likely to reach their hearts, or save their souls. And if, on the other hand, he be driven on with a fierce and intemperate zeal, and vehement heat, without light, he will be likely to kindle the like unhallowed flame in his people, and to fire their corrupt passions and affections; but will make them never the better, nor lead them a step towards heaven, but drive them apace the other way.

But if he approves himself in his ministry, as both a burning and a shining light, this will be the way to promote true Christianity amongst his people, and to make them both wise, good, and cause religion to flourish among them in the purity and beauty of it.

When divine light and heat attend each other in ministers of the gospel, their light will be like the beams of the sun, that do not only convey light, but give life; and converts will be likely to spring up under their ministry, as the grass and plants of the field under the influence of the sun; and the souls of the saints will be likely to grow, and appear beautiful *as the lily,* and to *revive as the corn, and grow as the vine, and their scent to be as the wine of Lebanon;* and

their light will be like the light of Christ, which is the light of life, John viii. 12.

If the sun should shine upon the earth, with the same brightness that it doth now, yet if it were without any heat, it would give life to nothing; the world would be a desolate wilderness, with nothing growing in it; the death of every living thing must be the consequence; and the sun's light could be of no service to us, but to cause us to see our own and others' misery, without being able to help ourselves or them. On the other hand, if the sun diffused the same heat that now it does, but the world was destitute at the same time of any light, it would be equally unserviceable: mankind having no light to guide them in their business, in tilling the field, or gathering the produce of the earth, we should be like the Egyptians in the three days' darkness, who saw not one another, nor rose from their places: and thus also death would be the unavoidable consequence. But by light and heat accompanying one another, the whole face of the earth becomes fruitful, and is adorned, and all things are quickened and flourish, and mankind enjoy both life and comfort.

I proceed to the

V. Thing proposed in handling the doctrine, to apply these things to all here present, that Christ has called to the work of the gospel ministry, observing how much it concerns such to endeavor to be burning and shining lights.

Our office and work is most honorable, in that we are set by Christ to be lights or luminaries in the spiritual world. Light is the most glorious thing in the material world, and there are, it may be, no parts of the natural world that have so great an image of the goodness of God, as the lights or luminaries of heaven; and especially the sun, who is constantly communicating his benign influence to enlighten, quicken and refresh the world by his beams; which is probably the reason that the worship of the sun was (as is supposed) the first idolatry that mankind fell into. But so are ministers honored by their great Lord and Master, that they are set to be that to men's souls, that the lights of heaven are to their bodies; and that they might be the instruments and vehicles of God's greatest goodness, and the most precious fruits of his eternal love to them, and means of that life, and refreshment and joy, that are spiritual and eternal, and infinitely more precious than any benefit received by the benign beams of the sun in the firmament. And we shall be likely indeed to be the instruments of those unspeakable benefits to the souls of our fellow creatures, if we have those qualifications, which have been shown to be the true and proper excellency of ministers of the gospel. Herein our glory will answer the honorable station Christ has set us in. And hereby our ministry will be likely to be as beneficial as our office is honorable: we shall be like Christ, and shall shine with his beams; Christ will live in us, and be seen in his life and beauty in our ministry, and in our conversation, and we shall be most likely to be the means of bringing others to him, and of their receiving of his light, and being made partakers of his life, and having his joy fulfilled in them. And this will be the way for us hereafter to be as much advanced and distinguished in our reward, as we are honored in the office and business we are called to here. In this way, those whom Christ has set to be lights in his church, and to be stars in the spiritual world here, shall be lights also in the church triumphant, and shine as stars forever in heaven. Daniel xii. 3, "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever."

But if we fail of the proper excellency of ministers of the gospel, we shall not be in the sight of God the more worthy or honorable for our high office, but

the more abominable and inexcusable; our wickedness being aggravated by God's great goodness and condescension to us, and the peculiar obligations that he laid upon us; and instead of being eminently beneficial and great blessings, as lights to reflect the beams of Christ's glory and love, we shall be so much the more hurtful and pernicious, for our being in such a station; and so shall be likely hereafter to suffer a so much more dreadful punishment. The devils in hell are so much the more odious to God, and more the objects of his wrath, because he set them in the dignity and glory of angels, the excellency of which state they are fallen from. And it is likely that those in hell that will be nearest to the fallen angels, in their state of misery, will be those that Christ once set to be angels of the churches, but through their unfaithfulness, failed of their proper excellency and end.

Here I would apply myself in a few words to the person whose intended ordination, this day, to the great work of the gospel ministry, is the occasion of this discourse.

You have now, dear sir, heard something of the nature and design of that office to which you are this day, in the name of Christ, to be solemnly set apart. You are therein called to be a light to the souls of men, a lamp in God's temple, and a star in the spiritual world. And you have heard wherein, in Christ's esteem, consists the proper excellency of one in that office, and how in this a minister of the gospel becomes like his glorious master, and glorifies him, and is likely to be the instrument of the salvation and happiness of the souls of men, and to receive a glorious reward from the hands of God.

These, sir, are the motives that your are to be influenced by, to endeavor to be a burning and a shining light in the work of the ministry. As to the things of this world, you are not to expect outward ease, pleasure and plenty: nor are you to depend on the friendship and respect of men; but should prepare to endure hardness, as one that is going forth as a soldier to war. But they are higher things than these, more excellent benefits than the world can afford, that Christ offers to those that approve themselves to him in this work.

God in his providence has brought you far from your native land, and from your friends and acquaintance there; but you will have reason notwithstanding to acknowledge the good hand of his providence towards you, if he is pleased to make you a burning and shining light in this part of his church, and by the influence of your light and heat (or rather by his divine influence, with your ministry) to cause this wilderness to bud and blossom as the rose, and give it the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, and to cause you to shine in the midst of this people with warm and lightsome, quickening and comforting beams, causing their souls to flourish, rejoice and bear fruit like a garden of pleasant fruits, under the beams of the sun.

By this means you will be to their souls the vehicle of the influences and blessings of the heavenly world, which is a world of light and love, shall be ever held in Christ's right hand, and shall be terrible to the powers of darkness; and shall see more and more of the light of Christ's glory and grace in this place, with you and this people, and shall hereafter not only shine yourself, as the brightness of the firmament, but shall meet with them in glory also, who shall shine there around you, as a bright constellation in the highest heaven; where they shall be your everlasting crown of rejoicing.

But I hasten to the

VI. Thing proposed, which was to show what course ministers of the gospel ought to take, or what things they should do, that they may be burning and shining lights.

And here I shall but just mention things, without enlarging.

And in order to this, ministers should be diligent in their studies, and in the work of the ministry to which they are called; giving themselves wholly to it; taking heed to themselves, that their hearts be not engaged, and their minds swallowed up, and their time consumed, in pursuits after the profits and vain-glory of the world.

And particularly, ministers should be very conversant with the holy Scriptures; making it very much their business, with the utmost diligence and strictness, to search those holy writings: for they are as it were the beams of the light of the sun of righteousness; they are the light by which ministers must be enlightened, and the light they are to hold forth to their hearers; and they are the fire whence their hearts and the hearts of their hearers must be enkindled.

They should earnestly seek after much of the spiritual knowledge of Christ, and that they may live in the clear views of his glory. For by this means they will be changed into the image of the same glory and brightness, and will come to their people as Moses came down to the congregation of Israel, after he had seen God's back parts in the mount, with his face shining. If the light of Christ's glory shines upon them, it will be the way for them to shine with the same kind of light on their hearers, and to reflect the same beams, which have heat, as well as brightness. The light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, is the treasure the apostle speaks of, that ministers have, as in earthen vessels: 2. Cor. iv. 6, 7, "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into your hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels." This was probably typified of old, by the burning lights and lamps which Gideon's soldiers had in one hand in earthen pitchers, while they held a trumpet in the other, with which they sounded (typifying the preaching of the gospel). And thus with the sounds of these trumpets, and these burning lights or earthen vessels, they overcame the enemies of God and his people.

Ministers, in order to their being burning and shining lights, should walk closely with God, and keep near to Christ; that they may ever be enlightened and enkindled by him. And they should be much in seeking God, and conversing with him by prayer, who is the fountain of light and love: and knowing their own emptiness and helplessness should be ever dependent on Christ; being sensible with Jeremiah that they are children, should sit as children at Christ's feet to hear his word, and be instructed by him; and being sensible with Isaiah that they are men of unclean lips, should seek that their lips may be, as it were, touched with a live coal from the altar, as it were by the bright and burning seraphim.

I come now to the

VII. And last thing proposed, to say something very briefly concerning the duties of a people that are under the care of a minister corresponding with these things that Christ has taught us concerning the nature and end of this sacred office. And here I would have a special respect to the people of God in this place, who are about to have the care of their souls committed to him, that is now solemnly to be set apart to the work of the ministry.

If it be, as you have heard, the proper excellency of a minister of the gospel to be a burning and shining light, then it is your duty earnestly to pray for your minister, that he may be filled with divine light, and with the power of the Holy Ghost, to make him so. For herein you will but pray for the greatest benefit to yourselves; for if your minister burns and shines, it will be for

your light and life. That which has been spoken of, as it is the chief excellency of a minister, so it renders a minister the greatest blessing of any thing in the world that ever God bestows on a people.

And as it is your duty to pray that your minister may by this means become such a blessing to you, so you should do your part to make him so, by supporting him, and putting him under the best advantage, with a mind free from worldly cares, and the pressure of outward wants and difficulties, to give himself wholly to his work; and by all proper acts of respect and kindness and assistance, to encourage his heart, and strengthen his hands: and to take heed that instead of this you do not take a course to obscure and extinguish the light that would shine among you, and to smother and suppress the flame, by casting dirt upon it; by necessitating your minister by your penuriousness towards him, to be involved in worldly care; and by discouraging his heart by disrespect and unkindness. And particularly when your minister shows himself to be a burning light by burning with a proper zeal against any wickedness that may be breaking out amongst his people, and manifests it by bearing a proper testimony against it in the preaching of the word, or by a faithful exercise of the discipline of God's house, instead of taking it thankfully, and yielding to him in it, as you ought, does not raise another fire of a contrary nature against it, viz., the fire of your unhallowed passions, reflecting upon and reproaching him for his faithfulness. Herein you will act very unbecoming a Christian people, and show yourselves very ungrateful to your minister, and to Christ, who has bestowed upon you so faithful a minister, and will also, while you fight against him, and against Christ, fight most effectually against your own souls. If Christ gives you a minister that is a burning and shining light, take heed that you do not hate the light, because your deeds are reproved by it; but love and rejoice in his light; and that not only for a season, like John the Baptist's apostatizing hearers; and come to the light. Let your frequent resort be to your minister for instruction in soul cases, and under all spiritual difficulties; and be open to the light and willing to receive it; and be obedient to it. And thus walk as the children of the light, and follow your minister wherein he is a follower of Christ, i. e., wherein he is as a burning and shining light. If you continue so to do, your path will be the path of the just, which shines more and more to the perfect day, and the end of your course shall be in those blissful regions of everlasting light above, where you shall shine forth with your minister, and both with Christ, *as the sun, in the kingdom of the heavenly Father.*

SERMON III.*

CHRIST THE EXAMPLE OF MINISTERS.

JOHN xiii 15, 16.—For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the servant is not greater than his Lord, neither he that is sent, greater than he that sent him.

WE have in the context, an account of one of the many very remarkable things that passed that night wherein Christ was betrayed (which was on many accounts the most remarkable night that ever was), viz., Christ's washing his disciples' feet; which action, as it was exceeding wonderful in itself, so it manifestly was symbolical, and represented something else far more important and more wonderful, even that greatest and most wonderful of all things that ever came to pass, which was accomplished the next day in his last sufferings. There were three symbolical representations given of that great event this evening; one in the passover, which Christ now partook of with his disciples; another in the Lord's supper, which he instituted at this time; and another in this remarkable action of his washing his disciples' feet. Washing the feet of guests was the office of servants, and one of their meanest offices: and therefore was fitly chosen by our Saviour to represent that great abasement which he was to be the subject of in the form of a servant, in becoming obedient unto death, even that ignominious and accursed death of the cross, that he might cleanse the souls of his disciples from their guilt and spiritual pollution.

This spiritual washing and cleansing of believers was the end for which Christ so abased himself for them. Tit. ii. 14, "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people." Eph. v. 25, 26, "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water." That Christ's washing his disciples' feet signified this spiritual washing of the soul, is manifest by his own words in the 8th verse of the context: "Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." Christ, in being obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, not only did the part of a servant unto God, but in some respects also of a servant unto us. And this is not the only place where his so abasing himself for our sakes is compared to the doing of the part of a servant to guests. We have the like representation made in Luke xxii. 27: "For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? Is not he that sitteth at meat? But I am among you as he that serveth." And wherein Christ was among the disciples as he that did serve, is explained in Matt. xx. 28, namely, in *his giving his life a ransom for them.*

When Christ had finished washing his disciples' feet, he solemnly requires their attention to what he had done, and commands them to follow his example therein. Verses 12—17, "So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done unto you? Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet: for I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the servant is not greater

* Preached at *Portsmouth*, at the ordination of the Rev. Mr. Job Strong, June 28th, 1749.

than his Lord, neither he that is sent, greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

When our Saviour calls on his disciples to imitate the example he had given them in what he had done, we are to understand him, not merely by the example he gave in the emblematical action, in washing his disciples' feet, in itself considered; but more especially, of that much greater act of his that was signified by it, in abasing himself so low, and suffering so much, for the spiritual cleansing and salvation of his people.

This is what is chiefly insisted on as the great example Christ has given us to follow: so it is once and again afterwards, in the discourse Christ had with his disciples, this same night, verse 34, of the chapter wherein is the text: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." Chap. xv. 12, 13, "This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." And so in 1 John iii. 16, "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

Christ, in the words of the text, does not only intend to recommend this example of his to the disciples as Christians, or some of his professing people, but especially as his ministers. This is evident by those words he uses to enforce this counsel, "Neither he that is sent, is greater than he that sent him." In which words he manifestly has respect to that great errand on which he had sent them, when he bid them *go and preach the gospel to the lost sheep of the house of Israel*, Matt. x. 5, 6; and on which they were to be sent after his resurrection, when he said to them, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." The same errand that Christ has respect to, John xx. 21: "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you."

And what confirms this is, that Christ elsewhere recommends to officers in his church, that are in that respect chief among his followers, the example which he set in his abasing himself to be as a servant that ministers to guests at a table, in his giving his life for us, Matt. xx. 27, 28: "Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." Compare Luke xxii. 25—28.

The work and business of ministers of the gospel is as it were that of servants, to wash and cleanse the souls of men: for this is done by the preaching of the word, which is their main business: Eph. v. 26, "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word."

The words of the text thus considered, do undoubtedly lead us to this conclusion, and teach us this doctrine, viz.,

That it is the duty of ministers of the gospel, in the work of their ministry, to follow the example of their great Lord and Master.

And this is what I would by divine assistance make the subject of my present discourse.

And I propose to handle this subject in the following method.

I. I would observe wherein ministers of the gospel ought to follow the example of Christ.

II. Give some reasons why they should follow his example.

III. I would endeavor to make a proper application of those things to myself, and others that are called to this work of the ministry.

IV Show what improvement should be made of them by the people of this church and congregation.

I. Then, I would show wherein ministers of the gospel ought, in the work of their ministry, to follow the example of their great Lord and Master, Jesus Christ.

And here,

1. In general, ministers should follow their Lord and Master in all those excellent virtues, and in that universal and eminent holiness of life, which he set an example of in his human nature.

The ministers of Christ should be persons of the same spirit that their Lord was of: the same spirit of humility and lowliness of heart; for the servant is not greater than his Lord. They should be of the same spirit of heavenly-mindedness and contempt of the glory, wealth and pleasures of this world: they should be of the same spirit of devotion and fervent love to God: they should follow the example of his prayerfulness; of whom we read from time to time of his retiring from the world, away from the noise and applauses of the multitudes, into mountains and solitary places for secret prayer, and holy converse with his Father; and once of his rising up in the morning a great while before day, and going and departing into a solitary place to pray, Mark i. 35;—and another time, of his going out into a mountain to pray, and continuing all night in prayer to God, Luke vi. 12. Ministers should follow Christ's example, in his strict, constant and inflexible observance of the commands which God had given him, touching what he should do and what he should say; he spake nothing of himself, but those things which the Father had commanded him, those he spake, and always did those things that pleased him, and continued in thorough obedience in the greatest trials, and through the greatest opposition that ever there was any instance of. Ministers should be persons of the same quiet, lamblike spirit that Christ was of, the same spirit of submission to God's will, and patience under afflictions, and meekness towards men, of the same calmness and composure of spirit under reproaches and sufferings from the malignity of evil men; of the same spirit of forgiveness of injuries; of the same spirit of charity, of fervent love and extensive benevolence; the same disposition to pity the miserable, to weep with those that weep, to help men under their calamities of both soul and body, to hear and grant the requests of the needy, and relieve the afflicted; the same spirit of condescension to the poor and mean, tenderness and gentleness towards the weak, and great and effectual love to enemies. They should also be of the same spirit of zeal, diligence and self-denial for the glory of God, and advancement of his kingdom, and for the good of mankind; for which things' sake Christ went through the greatest labors, and endured the most extreme sufferings.

2. More particularly should ministers of the gospel follow the example of their great Master, in the manner in which they seek the salvation and happiness of the souls of men. They should follow his example of love to souls: though it be impossible that they should love them to so great a degree, yet they should have the same spirit of love to them, and concern for their salvation, according to their capacity. Love to men's souls in Christ was far above any regard he had to his temporal interest, his ease, his honor, his meat and drink; and so it should be with his ministers. They should have the same spirit of compassion to men under their spiritual calamities and miseries, that he had of whom we read, Mark vi. 34, that "when he came out and saw much people, he was moved with compassion towards them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things." The word translated *moved with compassion*, signifies, that he was most sensibly affected, and had his inmost bowels moved with pity. And again we read, Luke xix.

that when Christ was riding to Jerusalem, that wicked city, but a few days before his crucifixion, and was come to the descent of the Mount of Olives, where he had a fair view of the city, when he beheld it, he wept over it, on account of the misery and ruin they had brought themselves into danger of by their sin; although the sin by which especially they had made themselves thus miserable, was their vile treatment of him (for Jerusalem was a city that had been peculiarly injurious to him); and though Christ knew how cruelly he should be treated in that city before that week was past, how he there should be set at nought, and with great malignity bound, falsely accused and condemned, reviled, spit upon, scourged and crucified: yet all does not prevent his most affectionate tears of compassion towards them. "When he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou (thou as wicked as thou art, and as vile as thou hast been in thy treatment of me; even thou), the things which belong unto thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes." (Compare Matt. xxiii. 37, and Luke xiii. 34.) One would have thought he would have been more concerned for himself than Jerusalem, who had such a dreadful cup to drink, and was to suffer such extreme things by the cruelty of Jerusalem that week. But he as it were forgets his own sorrow and death, and weeps over the misery of his cruel enemies.

Ministers should imitate their great Master in his fervent prayers for the good of the souls of men. We find it to be Christ's manner whenever he undertook any thing of special importance in the work of his ministry, first to retire and pour out his soul in extraordinary prayer to his Father. Thus when he was about to enter on a journey, and go a circuit throughout all Galilee, to preach in their synagogues, "he rose up a great while before day, and went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed," Mark i. 35—39. And when he was about to choose his twelve apostles, and send them out to preach the gospel, he first *went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God*, Luke vi. 12. And the night before his crucifixion, wherein he offered up himself a sacrifice for the souls of men, he pours out his soul in extraordinary prayer, for those he was about to die for, as we have an account in John xvii. That wonderful and most affecting prayer of his, was not so much for himself as for his people. Although he knew what amazing sufferings he was to undergo the next day, yet he seems as it were to be unmindful of himself, and to have his heart all taken up with concern about his disciples; which he manifests in his spending so much time in comforting and counselling them, and praying for them with great affection, compassion, earnest care and fatherly tenderness. And the prayers that he made in the garden of Gethsemane, under the amazing view of the cup he was to drink the next day, seem to be intercessory; especially the last of the three prayers which he there made, *when being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground:* when he did not pray that the cup might pass from him, as he had done before, but that *God's will might be done.* (Compare Luke xxii. 44, with Matt. xxvi. 42.) That prayer, as the apostle teaches us, Heb. v. 6, 7, was a prayer that he put up as our High Priest; and therefore must be a prayer of intercession for us, a prayer offered up with his blood which he sweat in his agony; as prayers were wont to be offered up with the blood of the sacrifices in the temple. His prayer at that time, *Thy will be done*, was not only an expression of submission, but had the form of a petition, as it is in the Lord's prayer. He prayed that God's will might be done in *his* being enabled *to do the will of God*, persevering in obedience unto death; and in the success of his sufferings; which might in an

eminent manner be called the will of God, as it is in Psal. xl. 7, 8: "Then said I, Lo, I come.—I delight to do thy will, O my God."

Ministers should follow the example of Christ in his diligence and laboriousness in his work. "He went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil," Acts x. 38. So abundant was he in labors, that oftentimes he scarcely allowed himself time to eat or drink; insomuch that his friends sometimes went out to lay hold of him, saying, "He is beside himself," Mark iii. 20, 21. That three years and a half of his public ministry was so filled with action and labor, that one of his disciples that constantly attended him, and was an eye-witness of his activity, tells us, that if *all that he did should be written, the world would not contain the books.*

Ministers should follow the example of Christ, in his readiness not only to labor, but suffer for the salvation of souls, to spend and be spent for them. In this respect the Apostle Paul imitated his Lord and Master. Philip. ii. 17, "Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all." Col. i. 24, "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for his body's sake, which is the church." 2 Cor. xii. 15, "And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you." Christ, in his prayers, labors and sufferings for the souls of men, is represented as travailing in birth with them. Isai. liii. 11, "He shall see of the travail of his soul." In like manner should ministers travail for the conversion and salvation of their hearers. They should imitate the faithfulness of Christ in his ministry, in speaking whatsoever God had commanded him, and declaring the whole counsel of God. They should imitate him in the manner of his preaching; who taught not as the Scribes, but with authority, boldly, zealously and fervently; insisting chiefly on the most important things in religion, being much in warning men of the danger of damnation, setting forth the greatness of the future misery of the ungodly; insisting not only on the outward, but also the inward and spiritual duties of religion: being much in declaring the great provocation and danger of spiritual pride, and a self-righteous disposition; yet much insisting on the necessity and importance of inherent holiness, and the practice of piety. Behaving himself with admirable wisdom in all that he said and did in his ministry, amidst the many difficulties, enemies and temptations he was surrounded with, wonderfully adapting his discourses to persons, seasons and occasions. Isai. l. 4, "The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary."

Ministers should follow their Master in his zeal, so wonderfully mixed and tempered with gentleness and condescension in his dealing with souls; preaching the gospel to the poor, and taking a gracious notice from time to time of little children. And they should imitate their Lord in his following the work of the ministry, not from mercenary views, or for the sake of worldly advantages, but for God's glory, and men's salvation; and in having his heart engaged in his work; it being his great delight, and his meat to do the will of his Father, and finish his work, John iv. 34, and having his heart set on the success of his great undertaking in the salvation of souls; this being the joy that was set before him, for which he run his race, endured the cross, and despised the shame; his delight in the prospect of the eternal salvation of souls, more than countervailing the dread he had of his extreme sufferings. Many waters could not quench his love, neither could the floods drown it, for his love was stronger than death; yea, than the mighty pains and torments of such a death.

I now proceed to the

II. Thing proposed in the handling this subject, which was to give some reasons why ministers of the gospel should follow the example of their great Lord and Master, Jesus Christ.

1. They should follow his example, because he is their Lord and Master. Christ, as he is a divine person, is the Lord of heaven and earth, and so one of infinite dignity, to whom our supreme respect is due; and on that account he is infinitely worthy that we should regard, not only his precepts, but example. The infinite honorableness of his person recommends his virtues, and a conformity to them as our greatest dignity and honor.

Christ is more especially the Lord of Christians; who are therefore under special obligations to follow him. He is their shepherd, and surely the flock should follow their shepherd. He is the captain of their salvation; and it becomes soldiers to follow their captain and leader. He is their head; not only their head of rule and authority, but their head of influence and communication, their vital head, and Christians are members of his body; but members, as partakers of the life and spirit of the head, are conformed to the head.

But Christ is still in a more peculiar manner the Lord and Master of ministers of the gospel, as they are not only members of his church, but the officers of his kingdom, and the dignified servants of his family. It is the manner of a people to imitate their prince, but especially the ministers of his kingdom, and officers of his household. It is the duty of the whole army to follow their general, but especially of those officers that have a commission under him.

2. Ministers of the gospel are in some respects called and devoted to the same work and business that Christ himself was appointed to. Ministers are not men's mediators; for there is but one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus: they are not our priests to make atonement and work out righteousness for us; for Christ by one offering has perfected forever them that are sanctified; they are not lords over God's heritage; for one is their master, even Christ. But yet ministers of the gospel, as Christ's servants and officers under him, are appointed to promote the designs of that great work of Christ, the work of salvation. It is the work that ministers are devoted to; and therefore they are represented as co-workers with Christ. 2 Cor. vi. 1, "We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain." Christ is the Saviour of the souls of men; ministers also, are spoken of in Scripture as saving men's souls. 1 Tim. iv. 16, "In doing this, thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee." Rom. x. 14, "If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them." 1 Cor. ix. 22, "That I might by all means save some." And whereas it is said, Obad, 21, "saviours shall come upon Mount Zion;" ministers of the gospel are supposed to be there intended.

The work of ministers is in many respects like the work that Christ himself was appointed to, as the Saviour of men; and especially the same with the work which Christ does in his prophetical office; only with this difference, that ministers are to speak and act wholly under Christ, as taught of him, as holding forth his word, and by light and strength communicated from him. Christ himself after his baptism, followed the work of the ministry: he was a minister of the true sanctuary, Heb. viii. 2; he spake and acted as his Father's minister; was a minister of the gospel, and as such preached and administered sacraments. Pastors of churches are ministers of the same gospel; but in their ministry they act as the ministers of Christ. Jesus Christ is the great Bishop of souls; ministers are also bishops under him. Christ came into the world *that he might be the light of the world;* ministers are set to be lights unto the churches, and are

also said to be *the light of the world*, Matt. v. 14. Christ is the *bright and morning star;* ministers are *stars in Christ's hand.* Christ is *the messenger of the covenant;* ministers are called *messengers of the Lord of Hosts.* Christ is his people's *shepherd, the good shepherd, the great shepherd of his sheep.* Ministers are also frequently called shepherds, and are directed to feed the flock of Christ, which he purchased with his own blood.

Seeing therefore it is thus, that the work that ministers are called and devoted to, is no other than the work of Christ, or the work that Christ does, certainly they ought to do his work; which they do not, unless they imitate him, and do as he does, or as he hath set them an example.

3. The example of Christ is most worthy of ministers' imitation. His example was perfect, without error, blemish or defect; and therefore worthy to be made our rule, and to be regarded and followed without exception, limitation or reserve; unless in those things which he did that were proper to his peculiar office. Christ's virtue was not only perfect, but was exercised in those circumstances, and under those trials, that rendered his virtuous acts vastly the most amiable of any that ever appeared in any creature whether man or angel. If we consider the perfection of the virtue that Christ exercised, his virtue did exceed that of the most eminent saints, more than the purest gold exceeds the meanest and foulest ore: and if we consider the manner of its exercise, and the trials under which it was exercised, and the blessed fruits it has brought forth, so his virtue exceeds that of all other perfectly innocent creatures, and even of the brightest angel, as the sun in its glory exceeds the stars.

And this example was set us in our own nature, and so is especially fitted for our imitation. There was in the man Christ Jesus, who was one of us, and dwelt among us, such exercises of virtue as became our state and circumstances in the world, as those who dwell in frail flesh and blood, and as members of human society, and dwellers in such a world of sorrow and death.

And then these amiable exercises of virtue in Christ, were exhibited chiefly in the things which he did in that work wherein ministers are called to act as co-workers with him. The bright and glorious example of Christ that is set before us, is chiefly in what he did during the three years and a half of his public ministry; and in the devotion, heavenly-mindedness, humility, patience, meekness, forgiveness, self-denial and charity, which he exercised in the labors and sufferings he went through for the good of the souls of men: and therefore is especially set for the imitation of those who are set apart that they may make it the whole business of their lives to seek the same good of souls.

4. Ministers should follow that example of Christ which has been spoken of, because if they are fit for ministers, and are such as have any right to take that work upon themselves, Christ has set them this example in what he has done for their souls. "I have given you an example (says Christ in the text), that you should do as I have done to you." Ministers should be animated in this work by a great love to the souls of men, and should be ready to spend and be spent for them; for Christ loved them, and gave himself for them: he loved them with a love stronger than death. They should have compassion to men under their spiritual miseries, as Christ had pity on them. They should be much in prayer for the people of their flock, considering how Christ prayed and agonized for them, in tears of blood. They should travail in birth with the souls that are committed to their care, seeing their own salvation is the fruit of the travail of Christ's soul. They should exercise a meek and condescending spirit to the mean and weak and poor, and should as it were wash the feet of Christ's disciples; considering how Christ condescended to them, when they

were wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, and abased himself to wash their feet.

The chief trials of Christ's virtue, and so their most bright and eminent exercises, were in the abasement, labor and suffering, that he was the subject of for our salvation. Which certainly may well endear those virtues to us, and greatly engage us to imitate that example: so the things whereof this example consists, were things by which we have infinite benefit, without which we should have been unspeakably miserable forever and ever, and by virtue of which we have the glorious privilege of the children of God, and have a full title to the crown of exceeding glory, and pleasures for evermore, at God's right hand.

III. I now proceed, as was proposed, in the third place, to apply what has been said to myself, and others that are employed in this sacred work of the gospel ministry, and to such as are about to undertake it, or are candidates for it; and particularly to him that is now to be solemnly set apart to this work in this place.

We are those to whom these things especially belong: we may hear Christ saying to us this day, "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done." For the words of Christ in the text were not only spoken to the twelve, but are also spoken unto us. We have now had represented to us, though in a very imperfect manner, the example that Christ has set, and what reasons there are that we, above all others, should imitate it.

It is not only our great duty, but will be our greatest honor to imitate Christ, and do the work that he has done, and so act as co-workers with him.

There are two kinds of persons that are given to Christ, and appointed and devoted of God to be his servants, to be employed with Christ, and under him, in his great work of the salvation of the souls of men; and they are angels and ministers. The angels are all of them, even the most exalted of them, subjected of God the Father to our Redeemer, and given to him as his servants, to be subservient to the great designs of his saving and glorifying his elect; Heb. i. 14, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" And doubtless, they were created for this very end: God made them for his Son, to be subservient to him in this great work; which seems to be the chief design of all God's works. And the employment of ministers of the gospel in this respect, is like that of the glorious angels. The principalities and powers in heavenly places, esteem it not any debasement, but their great honor, to be employed as Christ's ministers in this work; for therein they are employed as the ministers of God, in the greatest and most honorable of all God's works; that work of God wherein his glory is chiefly displayed, and which his heart was chiefly upon from eternity. It is the honor of the Son of God himself, that he is appointed to this work. It was because God the Father infinitely loved his Son, and delighted to put honor upon him, that he appointed him to be the author of that glorious work of the salvation of men. And when we consider the greatness, importance and excellency of it, we have reason to be astonished at the condescension of God, that he would ever improve mere creatures as co-workers and ministers of Christ in this affair; *for who is sufficient for these things?* 2 Cor. ii. 6. "Who is fit or worthy? Who is equal to a work of such dignity, and vast importance?" Especially have we reason to wonder that God will employ, not only holy and glorious angels, but feeble, frail, sinful worms of the dust, in this work, who need redemption themselves: and yet the honor that is put upon faithful ministers, is in some respects greater than that of the angels: they seem to be that kind of servants that are the most dignified of the two. For Christ makes his angels to be ministering

spirits unto them, unto the faithful ministers; and the angels are their angels: as faithful ministers of the gospel are not only ministers to the church, but dignified members of the church, that spouse of the King of glory, on whom the most glorious angels, the highest ministers in the court of heaven, are appointed to attend. And then Christ seems especially to delight to carry on his work of the salvation of souls, through the ministrations of men, who have that nature that Christ is united to, and that are of those sons of men with whom he had his delight before the world was made. So it is by the ministration of men, that the Scriptures are given; they were the penmen of the holy Bible; and by them the gospel is preached to the world: by them ordinances are administered, and, through their ministrations, especially, souls are converted. When Christ himself was employed in the work of the ministry, in the time of his humiliation, but few, comparatively, were brought home to him, immediately by his ministrations: it pleased Christ to reserve this honor for his disciples and ministers, after his ascension, to whom he promised that they should, in this respect, do greater works than he, Job xiv. 12; and accordingly it was by their preaching that the gentile world was converted, and Satan's kingdom overthrown. Thus God delights "to perfect praise out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, that he may still the enemy and the avenger."

It will be our great honor that we are called to this work of Christ, if therein we follow him; for therein we shall be like the Son of God: but if we are unfaithful in this office, and do not imitate our master, our offence will be heinous in proportion to the dignity of our office, and our final and everlasting disgrace and ignominy proportionably great; and we, who in honor are exalted up to heaven, shall be cast down proportionably low in hell."

Let us further consider, that our following the example of Christ in the work of the ministry, is the way to enjoy the sensible, joyful presence of Christ with us. The disciples had the comfort of Christ's presence and conversation by following him, and going where he went. When we cease to follow him, he will go from us, and we shall soon lose sight of him.

Our being conformed to Christ's example, will also be the way for us to be conformed to him, and partake with him in his privileges: it is the way for us to have his joy fulfilled in us. Christ, in doing the work to which the Father appointed him, obtained a glorious victory over his enemies, and having spoiled principalities and powers, triumphed over them. If we imitate his example, it will be the way for us in like manner to conquer principalities and powers, yea, to be much more than conquerors: it will be the way for us always to triumph in Christ Jesus. It will be the way for us to obtain success in our ministry, and actually to be made the happy instruments of the eternal salvation of souls. Christ has not only *told* us, but *shown* us the way to success in our business, and the way to victory over all that oppose us in it. And our imitating Christ in our ministry, will be the way for us to be partakers with him in his glory; the way for us in like manner to be approved, and openly honored and rewarded by God; the way to be brought to sit with Christ on his throne, as he is set down with the Father on his throne. And as Christ is now exalted to shine as the bright luminary and glory of heaven, so our following his example, will be the way for us to be exalted, to *shine* with him, "as the stars forever and ever," Daniel xii. 3. And as Christ in heaven rejoices in his success, and will receive his church, presented to him without spot, as his everlasting crown; so our imitating Christ in our work, will be the way to partake with Christ in this joy, and have the souls whose salvation we are the instruments of, to be our crown of rejoicing forever. Thus Christ and we shall

rejoice together in that world of glory and joy where there is no more labor or sorrow. And we must enter into that joy and glory, in the way of following Christ in our work; there is no other way for ministers to enter there.

And that we may thus follow Christ's example, and be partakers with him in his glory, we had need to be much in prayer for his Spirit. Christ himself, though the eternal Son of God, obtained the Holy Spirit for himself in a way of prayer: Luke iii. 21, 22, "Jesus being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended like a dove upon him." If we have the spirit of Christ dwelling in us, we shall have Christ himself thereby living in us, and then we shall undoubtedly live like him. If that fountain of light dwells richly in us, we shall shine like him, and so shall be burning and shining lights.

That we may *be* and *behave* like Christ, we should earnestly seek much acquaintance with him, and much love to him, and be much in secret converse with him. It is natural, and as it were necessary for us to imitate those whom we are much acquainted and conversant with, and have a strong affection for.

And in order to our imitating Christ in the work of the ministry, in any tolerable degree, we had need not to have our hearts overcharged, and time filled up with worldly affections, cares and pursuits. The duties of a minister that have been recommended, are absolutely inconsistent with a mind much taken up with worldly profit, glory, amusements and entertainments.

And another thing that is of very great importance, in order to our doing the work that Christ did, is, that we take heed that the religion which we promote, be that same religion that Christ taught and promoted, and not any of its counterfeits and delusive appearances, or any thing substituted by the subtle devices of Satan, or vain imaginations of men in lieu of it. If we are zealous and very diligent to promote religion, but do not take good care to distinguish true from false religion, we shall be in danger of doing much more hurt than good, with all our zeal and activity.

I come now to the

IV. And last thing at first proposed, viz., to show what improvement should be made of what has been said, by the people of this church and congregation, who are now about solemnly to commit their souls to the charge of him they have chosen to be their pastor, and who is now about to be set apart to that office.

And YOU, MY BRETHREN, as all of you have immortal souls to save, if you have considered the things that have been spoken, cannot but be sensible, that it not only greatly concerns your elect pastor to take heed how he behaves himself in his great work, wherein he is to act as a co-worker with Christ for your salvation; but that it infinitely concerns you how you receive him, and behave towards him. Seeing that it is for *your* eternal salvation that he is appointed to watch and labor; and seeing his business is to do the work of Christ for you, it is natural and easy to infer, that your reception and entertainment of him should in some respect imitate the church's reception of Jesus Christ. Gal. iv. 14, "My temptation which was in my flesh, ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus." Christ in the text, commands those whom he sends, to follow his example, and then in the 20th verse following, he directs those to whom he sends them, how to treat them. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me." Seeing the work of your minister is in some respects the same with the work of Christ, and he is to be appointed and devoted to do this work for your souls in particular,

surely you should esteem him very highly in love for his work's sake, and do all that is in your power to help him, and put him under the best advantages to imitate his great master *in* this work, to give himself wholly *to* his work, as Christ did during the time of his ministry, and to be successful *in* his work. And as it was observed before, that it is impossible that ministers should in any tolerable degree imitate the example of Christ in their work, if their minds are overcharged with worldly cares and concerns, you ought so to provide for him and support him, that he shall have no need to entangle himself with these things; otherwise you will not only bring a great temptation upon him, which will vastly tend to hinder him in the work of Christ among you, but will, for the sake of sparing a little of your worldly substance to yourselves, foolishly and miserably starve your own souls, and the souls of your children, and will but cheat yourselves; for you will not be in the way to prosper either in your spiritual or temporal concerns. The way to have your houses filled with plenty, is to "honor the Lord with your substance, and with the first fruits of all your increase," Prov. iii. 9.

And as it is your duty and interest well to support your minister, so it concerns you to pray earnestly for him, and each one to do what in him lies in all respects to encourage and help him, and strengthen his hands, by attending diligently to his ministry, receiving the truth in love, treating him with the honor due to a messenger of Christ, carefully avoiding all contention with him, and one with another. And take heed in particular, that you do not forsake him to follow those, who under pretence of extraordinary purity, are doubtless doing the devil's work, in separating themselves, and endeavoring to draw off others from the ministers and churches in the land in general.

If you think I have spoken something freely to you, I hope it will be considered, that this is probably the last time you will ever hear me speak from the pulpit, and that I shall never see you again till we see one another in the invisible eternal world, where these things will open to us all in their just importance.

And now nothing is left but to express my sincerest wishes and prayers, that the God of all grace would be with you, and your elect pastor, and that he would give you in him a great and long-lasting blessing, that you may enjoy much of the presence of Christ with you in him; that in him may be made up the great loss you sustained by the death of your former faithful and eminent pastor, whose praise was in all the churches; and that you may receive him as you ought to receive a faithful minister of Jesus Christ, and may be a great comfort to him, and may receive great spiritual and eternal benefit by his means; and that you may be each other's crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus.

SERMON IV.*

GOD'S AWFUL JUDGMENT IN THE BREAKING AND WITHERING OF THE STRONG RODS OF COMMUNITY.

EZEKIEL xix. 12.—Her strong rods were broken and withered.

IN order to a right understanding and improving these words, these four things must be observed and understood concerning them.

1. Who she is that is here represented as having had strong rods, viz., the Jewish community, who here, as often elsewhere, is called the people's mother. She is here compared to a vine planted in a very fruitful soil, verse 10. The Jewish church and state is often elsewhere compared to a vine; as Psalm lxxx. 8, &c., Isai. v. 2, Jer. iii. 21, Ezek. xv., and chapter xvii. 6.

2. What is meant by her strong rods, viz., her wise, able, and well qualified magistrates or rulers. That the rulers or magistrates are intended is manifest by verse 11: "And she had strong rods for the sceptres of them that bare rule." And by rods that were strong, must be meant such rulers as were well qualified for magistracy, such as had great abilities and other qualifications fitting them for the business of rule. They were wont to choose a rod or staff of the strongest and hardest sort of wood that could be found, for the mace or sceptre of a prince; such a one only being counted fit for such a use: and this generally was overlaid with gold.

It is very remarkable that such a strong rod should grow out of a weak vine; but so it had been in Israel, through God's extraordinary blessing, in times past. Though the nation is spoken of here, and frequently elsewhere, as weak and helpless in itself, and entirely dependent as a vine, that is the weakest of all trees, that cannot support itself by its own strength, and never stands but as it leans on, or hangs by something else that is stronger than itself; yet God had caused many of her sons to be strong rods, fit for sceptres; he had raised up in Israel many able and excellent princes and magistrates in days past, that had done worthily in their day.

3. It should be understood and observed what is meant by these strong rods being broken and withered, viz., these able and excellent rulers being removed by death. Man's dying is often compared in Scripture to the withering of the growth of the earth.

4. It should be observed after what manner the breaking and withering of these strong rods is here spoken of, viz., as a great and awful calamity, that God had brought upon that people. It is spoken of as one of the chief effects of God's fury and dreadful displeasure against them. "But she was plucked up in fury, she was cast down to the ground, and the east wind dried up her fruit; her strong rods were broken and withered, the fire hath consumed them." The great benefits she enjoyed while her strong rods remained, are represented in the preceding verse: "And she had strong rods for the sceptres of them that bare rule, and her stature was exalted among the thick branches, and she appeared in her height with the multitude of her branches." And the terrible calamities that attended the breaking and withering of her strong rods, are rep-

* Preached at Northampton on the Lord's day, June 26, 1748, on the death of the Hon. John Stoddard, Esq., often a member of his Majesty's council, for many years chief justice of the court of common pleas for the county of Hampshire, judge of the probate of wills, and chief colonel of the regiment, &c., who died at Boston, June 19, 1748, in the 67th year of his age.

resented in the two verses next following the text: "And now she is planted in the wilderness, in a dry and thirsty ground. And fire is gone out of a rod of her branches, which hath devoured her fruit." And in the conclusion in the next words, is very emphatically declared the worthiness of such a dispensation to be greatly lamented: "So that she hath no strong rod to be a sceptre to rule. This is a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation."

That which I therefore observe from the words of the text, to be the subject of discourse at this time, is this:

When God by death removes from a people those in place of public authority and rule that have been as strong rods, it is an awful judgment of God on that people, and worthy of great lamentation.

In discoursing on this proposition, I would,

I. Show what kind of rulers may fitly be called strong rods.

II. Show why the removal of such rulers from a people, by death, is to be looked upon as an awful judgment of God on that people, and is greatly to be lamented.

I. I would observe what qualifications of those who are in public authority and rule may properly give them the denomination of strong rods.

1. One qualification of rulers whence they may properly be denominated strong rods, is great ability for the management of public affairs. When they that stand in place of public authority are men of great natural abilities, when they are men of uncommon strength of reason and largeness of understanding; especially when they have remarkably a genius for government, a peculiar turn of mind fitting them to gain an extraordinary understanding in things of that nature, giving ability, in an especial manner, for insight into the mysteries of government, and discerning those things wherein the public welfare or calamity consists, and the proper means to avoid the one and promote the other; an extraordinary talent at distinguishing what is right and just, from that which is wrong and unequal, and to see through the false colors with which injustice is often disguised, and unravel the false, subtle arguments and cunning sophistry that is often made use of to defend iniquity; and when they have not only great natural abilities in these respects, but when their abilities and talents have been improved by study, learning, observation, and experience; and when by these means they have obtained great actual knowledge; when they have acquired great skill in public affairs, and things requisite to be known, in order to their wise, prudent, and effectual management; when they have obtained a great understanding of men and things, a great knowledge of human nature, and of the way of accommodating themselves to it, so as most effectually to influence it to wise purposes; when they have obtained a very extensive knowledge of men with whom they are concerned in the management of public affairs, either those that have a joint concern in government, or those that are to be governed; and when they have also obtained a very full and particular understanding of the state and circumstances of the country or people that they have the care of, and know well their laws and constitution, and what their circumstances require; and likewise have a great knowledge of the people of neighbor nations, states, or provinces, with whom they have occasion to be concerned in the management of public affairs committed to them; these things all contribute to the rendering those that are in authority fit to be denominated strong rods.

2. When they have not only great understanding, but largeness of heart, and a greatness and nobleness of disposition, this is another qualification that belongs to the character of a strong rod.

Those that are by divine Providence set in places of public authority and

rule, are called "gods, and sons of the Most High," Psalm lxxxii. 6. And therefore it is peculiarly unbecoming them to be of a mean spirit, a disposition that will admit of their doing those things that are sordid and vile; as when they are persons of a narrow, private spirit, that may be found in little tricks and intrigues to promote their private interest, will shamefully defile their hands to gain a few pounds, are not ashamed to nip and bite others, grind the faces of the poor, and screw upon their neighbors; and will take advantage of their authority or commission to line their own pockets with what is fraudulently taken or withheld from others. When a man in authority is of such a mean spirit, it weakens his authority, and makes him justly contemptible in the eyes of men, and is utterly inconsistent with his being a strong rod.

But on the contrary, it greatly establishes his authority, and causes others to stand in awe of him, when they see him to be a man of greatness of mind, one that abhors those things that are mean and sordid, and not capable of a compliance with them; one that is of a public spirit, and not of a private, narrow disposition; a man of honor, and not a man of mean artifice and clandestine management, for filthy lucre, and one that abhors trifling and impertinence, or to waste away his time, that should be spent in the service of God, his king, or his country, in vain amusements and diversions, and in the pursuit of the gratifications of sensual appetites; as God charges the rulers in Israel, that pretended to be their great and mighty men, with being mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink. There does not seem to be any reference to their being men of strong heads, and able to bear a great deal of strong drink, as some have supposed: there is a severe sarcasm in the words; for the prophet is speaking of the great men, princes, and judges in Israel (as appears by the verse next following), which should be mighty men, strong rods, men of eminent qualifications, excelling in nobleness of spirit, of glorious strength and fortitude of mind; but instead of that, they were mighty or eminent for nothing but gluttony and drunkenness.

3. When those that are in authority are endowed with much of a spirit of government, this is another thing that entitles them to the denomination of strong rods. When they not only are men of great understanding and wisdom in affairs that appertain to government, but have also a peculiar talent at using their knowledge, and exerting themselves in this great and important business, according to their great understanding in it; when they are men of eminent fortitude, and are not afraid of the faces of men, are not afraid to do the part that properly belongs to them as rulers, though they meet with great opposition, and the spirits of men are greatly irritated by it; when they have a spirit of resolution and activity, so as to keep the wheels of government in proper motion, and to cause judgment and justice to run down as a mighty stream; when they have not only a great knowledge of government, and the things that belong to it in the theory, but it is, as it were, natural to them to apply the various powers and faculties with which God has endowed them, and the knowledge they have obtained by study and observation, to that business, so as to perform it most advantageously and effectually.

4. Stability and firmness of integrity, fidelity, and piety, in the exercise of authority, is another thing that greatly contributes to, and is very essential in the character of a strong rod.

When he that is in authority is not only a man of strong reason and great discerning to know what is just, but is a man of strict integrity and righteousness, is firm and immovable in the execution of justice and judgment; and when he is not only a man of great ability to bear down vice and immorality,

but has a disposition agreeable to such ability; is one that has a strong aversion to wickedness, and is disposed to use the power God has put into his hands to suppress it; and is one that not only opposes vice by his authority, but by his example; when he is one of inflexible fidelity, will be faithful to God whose minister he is, to his people for good, is immovable in his regard to his supreme authority, his commands and his glory; and will be faithful to his king and country; will not be induced by the many temptations that attend the business of men in public authority, basely to betray his trust; will not consent to do what he thinks not to be for the public good, for his own gain or advancement, or any private interest; is one that is well principled, and is firm in acting agreeably to his principles, and will not be prevailed with to do otherwise through fear or favor, to follow a multitude, or to maintain his interest in any on whom he depends for the honor or profit of his place, whether it be prince or people; and is also one of that strength of mind, whereby he rules his own spirit. These things do very eminently contribute to a ruler's title to the denomination of a strong rod.

5. And LASTLY, It also contributes to the strength of a man in authority by which he may be denominated a strong rod, when he is in such circumstances as give him advantage for the exercise of his strength, for the public good; as his being a person of honorable descent, of a distinguished education, his being a man of estate, one that is advanced in years, one that has long been in authority, so that it is become, as it were, natural for the people to pay him deference, to reverence him, to be influenced and governed by him, and submit to his authority; his being extensively known, and much honored and regarded abroad; his being one of a good presence, majesty of countenance, decency of behavior, becoming one in authority; of forcible speech, &c. These things add to his strength, and increase his ability and advantage to serve his generation in the place of a ruler, and therefore in some respect, serve to render him one that is the more fitly and eminently called a strong rod.

I now proceed,

II. To show that when such strong rods are broken and withered by death, it is an awful judgment of God on the people that are deprived of them, and worthy of great lamentation.

And that on two accounts:

1. By reason of the many positive benefits and blessings to a people that such rulers are the instruments of.

Almost all the prosperity of a public society and civil community does, under God, depend on their rulers. They are like the main springs or wheels in a machine, that keep every part in its due motion, and are in the body politic, as the vitals in the body natural, and as the pillars and foundation in a building Civil rulers are called "the foundations of the earth," Psalm lxxxii. 5, and xi. 3.

The prosperity of a people depends more on their rulers than is commonly imagined. As they have the public society under their care and power, so they have advantage to promote the public interest every way; and if they are such rulers as have been spoken of, they are some of the greatest blessings to the public. Their influence has a tendency to promote their wealth, and cause their temporal possessions and blessings to abound: and to promote virtue amongst them, and so to unite them one to another in peace and mutual benevolence, and make them happy in society, each one the instrument of his neighbor's quietness, comfort, and prosperity; and by these means to advance their reputation and honor in the world; and which is much more, to promote their

spiritual and eternal happiness. Therefore, the wise man says, Eccles. x. 17, "Blessed art thou, O land, when thy king is the son of nobles."

We have a remarkable instance and evidence of the happy and great influence of such a strong rod as has been described, to promote the universal prosperity of a people, in the history of the reign of Solomon, though many of the people were uneasy under his government, and thought him too rigorous in his administration; see 1 Kings xii. 4: "Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig-tree, from Dan even to Beersheba, all the days of Solomon." 1 Kings iv. 25, "And he made silver to be among them as stones for abundance:" chap. x. 27, "And Judah and Israel were many, eating and drinking and making merry." The queen of Sheba admired, and was greatly affected with the happiness of the people, under the government of such a strong rod: 1 Kings x. 8, 9, says she, "Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom. Blessed be the Lord thy God which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel; because the Lord loved Israel forever, therefore made he thee king, to do judgment and justice."

The flourishing state of the kingdom of Judah, while they had strong rods for the sceptres of them that bare rule, is taken notice of in our context: "Her stature was exalted among the thick branches, and she appeared in her height with the multitude of her branches."

Such rulers are eminently the ministers of God to his people for good: they are great gifts of the Most High to a people, and blessed tokens of his favor, and vehicles of his goodness to them, and therein images of his own Son, the grand medium of all God's goodness to fallen mankind: and therefore, all of them are called, sons of the Most High. All civil rulers, if they are as they ought to be, such strong rods as have been described, will be like the Son of the Most High, vehicles of good to mankind, and like him, will be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds, as the tender grass springeth out of the earth, by clear shining after rain. And therefore, when a people are bereaved of them, they sustain an unspeakable loss, and are the subjects of a judgment of God that is greatly to be lamented.

2. On account of the great calamities such rulers are a defence from. Innumerable are the grievous and fatal calamities which public societies are exposed to in this evil world, which they can have no defence from without order and authority. If a people are without government, they are like a city broken down and without walls, encompassed on every side by enemies, and become unavoidably subject to all manner of confusion and misery.

Government is necessary to defend communities from miseries from within themselves; from the prevalence of intestine discord, mutual injustice, and violence; the members of the society continually making a prey one of another, without any defence one from another. Rulers are the heads of union in public societies, that hold the parts together; without which nothing else is to be expected, than that the members of the society will be continually divided against themselves, every one acting the part of an enemy to his neighbor, every one's hand against every man, and every man's hand against him; going on in remediless and endless broils and jarring, until the society be utterly dissolved and broken in pieces, and life itself, in the neighborhood of our fellow creatures, becomes miserable and intolerable.

We may see the need of government in societies by what is visible in families, those lesser societies, of which all public societies are constituted. How miserable would these little societies be, if all were left to themselves, without

any authority or superiority in one above another, or any head of union and influence among them? We may be convinced by what we see of the lamentable consequences of the want of a proper exercise of authority and maintenance of government in families that yet are not absolutely without all authority. No less need is there of government in public societies, but much more, as they are larger. A very few may possibly, without any government, act by concert, so as to concur in what shall be for the welfare of the whole; but this is not to be expected among a multitude, constituted of many thousands, of a great variety of tempers and different interests.

As government is absolutely necessary, so there is a necessity of strong rods in order to it: the business being such as requires persons so qualified; no other being sufficient for, or well capable of the government of public societies: and therefore, those public societies are miserable, that have not such strong rods for sceptres to rule: Eccles. x. 16, "Wo to thee, O land, when thy king is a child."

As government, and strong rods for the exercise of it, are necessary to preserve public societies from dreadful and fatal calamities arising from among themselves; so no less requisite are they to defend the community from foreign enemies. As they are like the pillars of a building, so they are also like the walls and bulwarks of a city: they are under God the main strength of a people in the time of war, and the chief instruments of their preservation, safety and rest. This is signified in a very lively manner in the words that are used by the Jewish community in her lamentations, to express the expectations she had from her princes: Lam. iv. 20, "The breath of our nostrils, the anointed of the Lord, was taken in their pits, of whom we said, Under his shadow we shall live among the Heathen." In this respect also such strong rods are sons of the Most High, and images or resemblances of the Son of God, viz., as they are their saviours from their enemies; as the judges that God raised up of old in Israel are called, Nehem. ix. 27: "Therefore thou deliveredst them into the hand of their enemies, who vexed them: and in the time of their trouble, when they cried unto thee, thou heardest them from heaven; and according to thy manifold mercies, thou gavest them saviours, who saved them out of the hand of their enemies."

Thus both the prosperity and safety of a people under God, depends on such rulers as are *strong rods*. While they enjoy such blessings, they are wont to be like a vine planted in a fruitful soil, with her stature exalted among the thick branches, appearing in her height with the multitude of her branches; but when they have no strong rod to be a sceptre to rule, they are like a vine planted in a wilderness, that is exposed to be plucked up and cast down to the ground, to have her fruit dried up with the east wind, and to have fire coming out of her own branches to devour her fruit.

On these accounts, when a people's strong rods are broken and withered, it is an awful judgment of God on that people, and worthy of great lamentation: as when king Josiah (who was doubtless one of the strong rods referred to in the text) was dead, the people made great lamentation for him, 2 Chron. xxxv. 24, 25: "And they brought him to Jerusalem, and he died, and was buried in one of the sepulchres of his fathers: and all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. And Jeremiah lamented for Josiah, and all the singing men and the singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations to this day, and made them an ordinance in Israel: and behold, they are written in the Lamentations."

APPLICATION.

I come now to apply these things to our own case, under the late awful frown of Divine Providence upon us, in removing by death that honorable person in public rule and authority, an inhabitant of this town, and belonging to this congregation and church, who died at Boston the last Lord's day.

He was eminently a strong rod in the forementioned respects. As to his natural abilities, strength of reason, greatness and clearness of discerning, and depth of penetration, he was one of the first rank: it may be doubted whether he has left his superior in these respects in these parts of the world. He was a man of a truly great genius, and his genius was peculiarly fitted for the understanding and managing of public affairs.

And as his natural capacity was great, so was the knowledge that he had acquired, his understanding being greatly improved by close application of mind to those things he was called to be concerned in, and by a very exact observation of them, and long experience in them. He had indeed a great insight into the nature of public societies, the mysteries of government, and the affairs of peace and war: he had a discerning that very few have of the things wherein the public weal consists, and what those things are that do expose public societies, and of the proper means to avoid the latter and promote the former. He was quick in his discerning, in that in most cases, especially such as belonged to his proper business, he at first sight would see further than most men when they had done their best; but yet he had a wonderful faculty of improving his own thoughts by meditation, and carrying his views a greater and greater length by long and close application of mind. He had an extraordinary ability to distinguish right and wrong, in the midst of intricacies and circumstances that tended to perplex and darken the case: he was able to weigh things, as it were, in a balance, and to distinguish those things that were solid and weighty from those that had only a fair show, without substance, which he evidently discovered in his accurate, clear, and plain way of stating and committing causes to a jury, from the bench, as by others hath been observed. He wonderfully distinguished truth from falsehood, and the most labored cases seemed always to lie clear in his mind, his ideas properly ranged—and he had a talent of communicating them to every one's understanding, beyond almost any one; and if any were misguided, it was not because truth and falsehood, right and wrong, were not well distinguished.

He was probably one of the ablest politicians that ever New England bred: he had a very uncommon insight into human nature, and a marvellous ability to penetrate into the particular tempers and dispositions of such as he had to deal with, and to discern the fittest way of treating them, so as most effectually to influence them to any good and wise purpose.

And never perhaps was there a person that had a more extensive and thorough knowledge of the state of this land, and its public affairs, and of persons that were jointly concerned in them: he knew this people, and their circumstances, and what their circumstances required: he discerned the diseases of this body, and what were the proper remedies, as an able and masterly physician. He had a great acquaintance with the neighboring colonies, and also the neighbor nations on this continent, with whom we are concerned in our public affairs: he had a far greater knowledge than any other person in the land, of the several nations of Indians in these northern parts of America, their tempers, manners, and the proper way of treating them, and was more exten-

sively known by them than any other person in the country: and no other person in authority in this province had such an acquaintance with the people and country of Canada, the land of our enemies, as he.

He was exceeding far from a disposition and forwardness to intermeddle with other people's business; but as to what belonged to the offices he sustained, and the important affairs that he had the care of, he had a great understanding of what belonged to them. I have often been surprised at the length of his reach, and what I have seen of his ability to foresee and determine the consequences of things, even at a great distance, and quite beyond the sight of other men. He was not wavering and unsteady in his opinion: his manner was never to pass a judgment rashly, but he was wont first thoroughly to deliberate and weigh an affair; and in this, notwithstanding his great abilities, he was glad to improve by the help of conversation and discourse with others (and often spake of the great advantage he found by it), but when, on mature consideration, he had settled his judgment, he was not easily turned from it by false colors, and plausible pretences and appearances.

And besides his knowledge of things belonging to his particular calling as a ruler, he had also a great degree of understanding in things belonging to his general calling as a Christian: he was no inconsiderable divine: he was a wise casuist, as I know by the great help I have found from time to time by his judgment and advice in cases of conscience, wherein I have consulted him: and indeed I scarce knew the divine that I ever found more able to help and enlighten the mind in such cases than he. And he had no small degree of knowledge in things pertaining to experimental religion; but was wont to discourse on such subjects, not only with accurate doctrinal distinctions, but as one intimately and feelingly acquainted with these things.

He was not only great in speculative knowledge, but his knowledge was practical; such as tended to a wise conduct in the affairs, business, and duties of life; so as properly to have the denomination of wisdom, and so as properly and eminently to invest him with the character of a wise man. And he was not only eminently wise and prudent in his own conduct, but was one of the ablest and wisest counsellors of others in any difficult affair.

The greatness and honorableness of his disposition was answerable to the largeness of his understanding: he was naturally of a great mind: in this respect he was truly the son of nobles. He greatly abhorred things which were mean and sordid, and seemed to be incapable of a compliance with them. How far was he from trifling and impertinence in his conversation! How far from a busy, meddling disposition! How far from any sly and clandestine management to fill his pockets with what was fraudulently withheld, or violently squeezed from the laborer, soldier, or inferior officer! How far from taking advantage from his commission or authority, or any superior power he had in his hands; or the ignorance, dependence, or necessities of others, to add to his own gains with what properly belonged to them, and with what they might justly expect as a proper reward for any of their services! How far was he from secretly taking bribes offered to induce him to favor any man in his cause, or by his power or interest to promote his being advanced to any place of public trust, honor, or profit! How greatly did he abhor lying and prevaricating! And how immovably steadfast was he to exact truth! His hatred of those things that were mean and sordid was so apparent and well known, that it was evident that men dreaded to appear in any thing of that nature in his presence.

He was a man remarkably of a public spirit, a true lover of his country, and greatly abhorred the sacrificing the public welfare to private interest.

He was very eminently endowed with a spirit of government. The God of nature seemed to have formed him for government, as though he had been made on purpose, and cast into a mould, by which he should be every way fitted for the business of a man in public authority. Such a behavior and conduct was natural to him as tended to maintain his authority, and possess others with awe and reverence, and to enforce and render effectual what he said and did in the exercise of his authority. He did not bear the sword in vain: he was truly a terror to evil doers. What I saw in him often put me in mind of that saying of the wise man, Prov. xx. 8, "The king that sitteth on the throne of judgment scattereth away all evil with his eyes." He was one that was not afraid of the faces of men; and every one knew that it was in vain to attempt to deter him, from doing what, on mature consideration, he had determined he ought to do. Every thing in him was great, and becoming a man in his public station. Perhaps never was there a man that appeared in New England to whom the denomination of *a great man* did more properly belong.

But though he was one that was great among men, exalted above others in abilities and greatness of mind, and in place of rule, and feared not the faces of men, yet he feared God. He was strictly conscientious in his conduct, both in public and private. I never knew the man that seemed more steadfastly and immovably to act by principle, and according to rules and maxims, established and settled in his mind by the dictates of his judgment and conscience: he was a man of strict justice and fidelity: faithfulness was eminently his character: some of his greatest opponents that have been of the contrary party to him in public affairs, yet have openly acknowledged this of him, that he was a faithful man. He was remarkably faithful in his public trusts: he would not basely betray his trust, from fear or favor: it was in vain to expect it; however men might oppose him or neglect him, and how great soever they were: nor would he neglect the public interest, wherein committed to him, for the sake of his own ease, but diligently and laboriously watched and labored for it night and day. And he was faithful in private affairs as well as public: he was a most faithful friend; faithful to any one that in any case asked his counsel: and his fidelity might be depended on in whatever affair he undertook for any of his neighbors.

He was a noted instance of the virtue of temperance, unalterable in it, in all places, in all companies, and in the midst of all temptations.

Though he was a man of a great spirit, yet he had a remarkable government of his spirit; and excelled in the government of his tongue. In the midst of all provocations he met with, among the multitudes he had to deal with, and the great multiplicity of perplexing affairs in which he was concerned, and all the opposition and reproaches he was at any time the subject of; yet what was there that ever proceeded out of his mouth, that his enemies could lay hold of? No profane language, no vain, rash, unseemly, and unchristian speeches. If at any time he expressed himself with great warmth and vigor, it seemed to be from principle and determination of his judgment, rather than from passion: when he expressed himself strongly, and with vehemence, those that were acquainted with him, and well observed him from time to time, might evidently see it was done in consequence of thought and judgment, weighing the circumstances and consequences of things.

The calmness and steadiness of his behavior in private, particularly in his family, appeared remarkable and exemplary to those who had most opportunity to observe it.

He was thoroughly established in those religious principles and doctrines of the first fathers of New England, usually called the *doctrines of grace*, and had

a great detestation of the opposite errors of the present fashionable divinity, as very contrary to the word of God, and the experience of every true Christian. And as he was a friend to truth, so he was a friend to vital piety and the power of godliness, and ever countenanced and favored it on all occasions.

He abhorred profaneness, and was a person of a serious and decent spirit, and ever treated sacred things with reverence. He was exemplary for his decent attendance on the public worship of God. Who ever saw him irreverently and indecently lolling, and laying down his head to sleep, or gazing and staring about the meeting-house in time of divine service? And as he was able (as was before observed) to discourse very understandingly of experimental religion, so to some persons with whom he was very intimate, he gave intimations sufficiently plain, while conversing of these things, that they were matters of his own experience. And some serious persons in civil authority, that have ordinarily differed from him in matters of government, yet, on some occasional close conversation with him on things of religion, have manifested a high opinion of him as to real experimental piety.

As he was known to be a serious person, and an enemy to a profane or vain conversation, so he was feared on that account by great and small. When he was in the room, only his presence was sufficient to maintain decency; though many were there that were accounted gentlemen and great men, who otherwise were disposed to take a much greater freedom in their talk and behavior, than they dared to do in his presence.

He was not unmindful of death, nor insensible of his own frailty, nor did death come unexpected to him. For some years past, he has spoken much to some persons of dying, and going into the eternal world, signifying that he did not expect to continue long here.

Added to all these things that have been mentioned to render him eminently a STRONG ROD, he was attended with many circumstances which tended to give him advantage for the exerting of his strength for the public good. He was honorably descended, was a man of considerable substance, had been long in authority, was extensively known and honored abroad, was high in the esteem of the many tribes of Indians in the neighborhood of the British colonies, and so had great influence upon them above any other man in New England; God had endowed him with a comely presence, and majesty of countenance, becoming the great qualities of his mind, and the place in which God had set him.

In the exercise of these qualities and endowments, under these advantages, he has been, as it were, a father to this part of the land, on whom the whole country had, under God, its dependence in all its public affairs, and especially since the beginning of the present war. How much the weight of all the warlike concerns of the country (which above any part of the land lies exposed to the enemy) has lain on his shoulders, and how he has been the spring of all motion, and the doer of every thing that has been done, and how wisely and faithfully he has conducted these affairs, I need not inform this congregation. You well know that he took care of the country as a father of a family of children, not neglecting men's lives, and making light of their blood; but with great diligence, vigilance and prudence, applying himself continually to the proper means of our safety and welfare. And especially has this his native town, where he has dwelt from his infancy, reaped the benefit of his happy influence: his wisdom has been, under God, very much our guide, and his authority our support and strength, and he has been a great honor to Northampton, and ornament to our church.

He continued in full capacity of usefulness while he lived; he was indeed

considerably advanced in years, but his powers of mind were not sensibly abated, and his strength of body was not so impaired, but that he was able to go long journeys, in extreme heat and cold, and in a short time.

But now this "strong rod is broken and withered," and surely the judgment of God therein is very awful, and the dispensation that which may well be for a lamentation. Probably we shall be more sensible of the worth and importance of such a strong rod by the want of it. The awful voice of God in this providence, is worthy to be attended to by this whole province, and especially by the people of this county, but in a more peculiar manner by us of this town. We have now this testimony of the divine displeasure, added to all the other dark clouds God has lately brought over us, and his awful frowns upon us. It is a dispensation, on many accounts, greatly calling for our humiliation and fear before God; an awful manifestation of his supreme, universal, and absolute dominion, calling us to adore the divine sovereignty, and tremble at the presence of this great God: and it is a lively instance of human frailty and mortality: we see how that none are out of the reach of death, that no greatness, no authority, no wisdom and sagacity, no honorableness of person or station, no degree of valuableness and importance, exempts from the stroke of death. This is therefore a loud and solemn warning to all sorts to prepare for their departure hence.

And the memory of this person who is now gone, who was made so great a blessing while he lived, should engage us to show respect and kindness to his family. This we should do both out of respect to him and to his father, your former eminent pastor, who in his day was, in a remarkable manner, a father to this part of the land in spirituals, and especially to this town, as this his son has been in temporals.—God greatly resented it, when the children of Israel did not show kindness to the house of Jerubbaal that had been made an instrument of so much good to them: Judges viii. 35, "Neither showed they kindness to the house of Jerubbaal, according to all the good which he had showed unto Israel."

SERMON V.*

THE SORROWS OF THE BEREAVED SPREAD BEFORE JESUS.

MATTHEW xiv. 12.—And his disciples came and took up the body and buried it, and went and told Jesus.

CONCERNING these words I would observe three things.

1. On what occasion that was, that we have an account of in the text.—It was on occasion of the death of John the Baptist, who was a person whose business it had been to preach the gospel of the kingdom of God. He was a minister of Jesus Christ, and had been improved to great service, was an instrument of much good to many in Judea and Jerusalem, in his lifetime. He was cruelly murdered by Herod, at the instigation of Herodias, having exposed himself to her malice by faithfully reproving them for their incestuous wickedness.

2. We may observe who the persons were spoken of in the text; they were those that had been the disciples of John the Baptist, that had sat at his feet to hear him preach the gospel, that were his constant followers, that were with him as those that received great benefit by his ministry, and were as it were his children.

3. We may observe their behavior on this occasion, consisting in two things.

(1.) That whereby they showed their regard to the remains of the deceased, *They took up the body and buried it:* it had been used in a barbarous manner by others, that had also been his hearers, and were under special obligations to have treated him with honor. They cruelly murdered him, by severing his head from his body; and his head was carried in a charger to Herodias, that she, instead of paying that respect that was due to the remains of so venerable a person, might have her malice and cruelty gratified by such a spectacle, and that she might thence take occasion to insult the dead. While that part of the dead body was thus used by Herodias, his disciples, out of respect and honor to their master and teacher, decently interred the rest.

2. That which they did, consequent on this, for God's glory and their own good, *They went and told Jesus.* Him they knew to be one that their master John, while he lived, had testified a great regard to. Jesus was he whose forerunner John was; whom he had preached, and of whom he had said, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world:" and, "This is he, of whom I said, After me cometh one that is preferred before me;" and whom he saw, and bare record that *this is the Son of God.* And probably they knew that Christ was one that had put great honor upon John their teacher in his lifetime. For he, though he was the Son of God, and John's Maker and Saviour, yet came to him to be baptized of him, and had said of him, that "among those that are born of women, there had not risen a greater than John the Baptist.

It was now a sorrowful time with John's disciples; when they were thus bereaved of him whose teachings they had sat under. And the manner of his death was doubtless very grievous to them. They were like a company of sorrowful, distressed, bereaved children; and what do they do in their sorrows, but go to Jesus with their complaint. The first thing that they do, after paying

*Preached at Hatfield, September 2, 1741, being the day of the interment of Rev. Mr. William Williams.

proper regards to the remains of their dear master, is to go to Christ, to spread their case before him, seeking comfort and help from him. Thus they sought their own benefit.

And probably one end of their immediately going and telling Jesus was, that he being informed of it, might conduct himself accordingly, as his wisdom should direct, for the interest of his own kingdom. When so great a person as John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, was thus martyred, it was a great event, in which the common cause in which both Christ and he were engaged, was greatly concerned: it was therefore fit that he that was at the head of the whole affair should be informed of it, for his future conduct in the affairs of his kingdom. And accordingly we find that Jesus seems immediately to be influenced in his conduct by these tidings; as you may see in the next verse: "When Jesus heard of it, he departed thence by ship into a desert place apart." Thus John's disciples sought God's glory.

The observation from the words that I would make the subject of my discourse at this time is this:

When any one is taken away by death, that has been eminent in the work of the gospel ministry, such as are thereby bereaved, should go and spread their calamity before Jesus.

Though in handling this subject I might particularly speak to several propositions that are contained in this observation, and many things might profitably be insisted on under it, if there were room for it within the compass of a sermon; yet I shall only give the *reasons of the doctrine*, and then hasten to the application.

The following reasons may be given why, in case of such an awful dispensation of Providence, those that are concerned in it, and bereaved by it, should go and spread their sorrows before Jesus.

1. Christ is one that is ready to pity the afflicted. It is natural for persons that are bereaved of any that are dear to them, and for all under deep sorrow, to seek some that they may declare and lay open their griefs to, that they have good reason to think will pity them, and have a fellow feeling with them of their distress. The heart that is full of grief wants vent, and desires to pour out its complaint; but it seeks a compassionate friend to pour it out before.

Christ is such a one, above all others. He of old, before his incarnation, manifested himself full of compassion towards his people; for that is Jesus that is spoken of, Isai. lxiii. 9: "In all their affliction he was afflicted; and the angel of his presence saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old." And when he was upon earth in his state of humiliation, he was the most wonderful instance of a tender, pitiful, and compassionate spirit that ever appeared in the world. How often are we told of his having compassion on one and another! So Matt. xv. 32, "Then Jesus called his disciples, and said unto them, I have compassion on the multitude." So he had compassion on the man possessed with devils, Mark v. 19: "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done to thee, and hath had compassion on thee." So we read of his pitying the mother, that was bereaved of her son, Luke vii. 13. There we have an account, when Christ went into the city of Nain, and met the people carrying out a dead man, the only son of his mother, that was a widow, that when he saw her he had compassion on her. So when the two blind men that sat by the way-side, cried to Jesus, as he passed by, saying, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David," we read that Jesus had compassion on them, Matt. xx. 39. So we read of his being moved with compassion, Matt. xiv. 14: "And

Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and when he saw them he was moved with compassion." His speeches to his disciples were full of compassion; especially those that he uttered a little before his death, of which we have an account in the 13th, 14th, 15th, and 16th chapters of John. His miracles were almost universally deeds of pity to persons under affliction.

And seeing such a pitiful heart appeared in him on all occasions, no wonder that John's disciples, when bereaved of their dear guide and teacher, and their hearts were full of sorrow, came to him for pity: which likewise induced Mary and Martha to come and fall down, pouring out their tears at Jesus' feet, when their dear brother Lazarus was dead: other Jews came to comfort them, before Jesus came, whom they little regarded, but when they heard that Jesus was come, they soon go and spread their sorrows before him; they were assured that he would pity them; and their expectation was not frustrated; for he was most tenderly affected and moved at their tears: we are told that on that occasion he groaned in spirit and was troubled, John xi. 33. And when he came to the grave, it is observed, and a special note seems to be set upon it, that he wept, verse 35.

He was one that wept with those that wept: and indeed it was mere pity that brought him into the world, and induced him not only to shed tears but to shed his blood: he poured out his blood as water on the earth, out of compassion to the poor, miserable children of men. And when do we ever read of any person coming to him when on earth, with a heavy heart, or under any kind of sorrow or distress, for pity or help, but what met with a kind and compassionate reception?

And he has the *same compassion* now he is *ascended into glory:* there is still the same encouragement for bereaved ones to go and spread their sorrows before him.

Afflicted persons love to speak of their sorrows to them that have had EXPERIENCE of affliction, and know what sorrow is: but there is none on earth or in heaven that ever had so much experience of sorrow as Christ: therefore he knows how to pity the sorrowful, and especially may we be confident that he is ready to pity those that are bereaved of a faithful MINISTER, because such a bereavement is a calamity that concerns the *souls of men;* and Christ hath especially shown his pity to men's souls; for it was chiefly for them that he died: to relieve the miseries of the soul especially, is it that he hath provided; and it was from pity to the souls of men that he made that provision for them that he hath done, in appointing such an order of men as GOSPEL MINISTERS, and in sending them forth to preach the gospel: it was because he had compassion on men's souls, that he hath appointed ministers to watch for souls.

2. Christ *has purchased all that persons need under such a bereavement.* He has purchased all that miserable men stand in need of under all their calamities, and comfort under every sort of affliction; and therefore his invitation to those that "labor and are heavy laden," to come to him for rest, may be understood in the most extensive sense, to extend to those that labor under any kind of burden of sin or sorrow, and to all that are "heavy laden" with either natural or moral evil. He has purchased divine cordials and supports for those hearts that are ready to sink. He has purchased all needed comfort and help for the widow and the fatherless. He has purchased a sanctified improvement and fruit of affliction, for all such as come to him, and spread their sorrows before him. He has purchased those things that are sufficient to make up their loss, that are bereaved of a great blessing in an eminent minister of the gospel. It is he that has purchased those divine blessings, those influences and fruits of the Spirit of God, that the work of the ministry is appointed to be the means of. Faithful

ministers themselves are the fruits of his purchase; and he has purchased all those gifts and graces whereby ministers do become faithful, eminent and successful; and therefore when he "ascended up on high, he received such gifts for men," Eph. iv. 8, &c. So that he has purchased all that is needful to make up for the loss that is sustained by the death of an eminent minister.

3. Christ is able to afford all that help that is needed in such a case. His power and his wisdom are as sufficient as his purpose, and answerable to his compassions. By the bowels of his mercies, the love and tenderness of his heart, he is disposed to help those that are in affliction; and his ability is answerable to his disposition. He is able to support the heart under the heaviest sorrows, and to give light in the greatest darkness. He can divide the thickest cloud with beams of heavenly light and comfort. He is one that gives songs in the night, and turns the shadow of death into the morning. He has power to make up the loss of those that are bereaved by the death of the most eminent minister. His own presence with the bereaved is sufficient; if the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls be present, how much more is this than enough to supply the want of any under-shepherd? And then he is able to furnish others with like gifts and graces for that work.

Persons under sorrowful bereavements are ready to go and lay open their sorrows to them that they think will be ready to pity them, though they know they can but pity them, and cannot help them. How much more is here in such a case to induce us to go to Jesus, who is not only so ready to pity, but so able to help, able abundantly more than to fill up the breach, and able to turn all our sorrows into joy?

4. The consideration of the special office of Christ, and the work that he has undertaken for his people, should engage them to go and spread such a calamity, as the bereavement of a faithful and eminent minister, before him. For he is the *Head of the body*, the great Shepherd of the sheep, and Lord of the harvest; that has undertaken the care of the whole church, and has the absolute government of it in his hands, and the supreme disposal and management of all ecclesiastical affairs, to whom belongs the care of the universal church, and every part of it, with respect to its supply with such guides, officers and ordinances, as it stands in need of. In case of bereavement of an eminent minister, it was he that sent forth such a minister, appointed him his charge and furnished him for his work, continued and assisted him in it, and in his own time removed him; and it is he that, in such a case, by his office, has the care of filling up the vacancy, and furnishing, establishing, and assisting successors, and supplying all the wants of bereaved churches. It is surely therefore suitable and natural to go to him in such a case, and spread such a calamity before him.

APPLICATION.

I come now to apply what has been said to the SORROWFUL OCCASION of our being thus assembled at this time, even the death of that aged SERVANT of God, who has long been eminent in the work of the gospel ministry in this place.

There are many that may well look on themselves as nearly concerned in this awful providence, and sharers in the bereavement; all of whom should be directed by this doctrine, to go and spread their affliction before JESUS, that compassionate, all-sufficient Head of the church, and Saviour of the body, that merciful and faithful High Priest, that knows how to pity the afflicted.

And particularly it now becomes and concerns you, that belong to this

church and congregation, that are bereaved of your aged and eminent PASTOR and FATHER, that has so long been a great blessing to you, now to go and tell JESUS.

The disciples of John, spoken of in the text, were those that were ordinarily under his instruction, and were his constant hearers, as it has been with you with respect to your aged PASTOR, that is now taken from you. Therefore be exhorted to do as they did. Do not think that you have finished your duty, when you have taken up his body and buried it, and have shown respect to his memory and remains at his funeral. This is the least part of your duty. That which mainly concerns you under this awful providence, is between Christ and your own souls.

God has now taken away from you an able and faithful minister of the New Testament, one that has long been a FATHER to you, and a FATHER in our Israel, a person of uncommon natural abilities, and distinguished learning, a great divine, of very comprehensive knowledge, and of a solid, accurate judgment Judiciousness and wisdom were eminently his character. He was one of eminent gifts, qualifying him for all parts of the work of the ministry; and there appeared a savor of holiness, in his exercise of those gifts in public and private. So that he improved them as a servant of Christ, and a man of God. He was not negligent of the talents which his Lord had committed to him; you need not be told with what constant diligence he improved them, how studious at home, and how laborious in his public work. He ever devoted himself to the work to which he was called. The ministry which he had received of the Lord, he took heed to fulfil, and pursued it with a constant and steadfast, even mind, through all its difficulties.

You know his manner of addressing heaven in his public prayers with you and for you, with what sanctity, humility, faith and fervency, he seemed to apply himself to the FATHER of lights, from time to time, when he stood in this desk as your mouth to God, and interceding for you, pleading with God through the grace and merits of a glorious MEDIATOR. And you know his manner of applying himself to you, when he came to you, from time to time, in the name of the Lord.

In his PUBLIC ministry, he mainly insisted on the most weighty and important things of religion; he was eminently an evangelical preacher; evangelical subjects seemed to be his delight. CHRIST was the great subject of his preaching; and he much insisted on those things that did nearly concern the essence and power of religion; and had a peculiar faculty of judiciously and clearly handling the doctrines he insisted on, and treating properly whatever subject he took in hand; and of selecting the most weighty arguments and motives to enforce and set home those things that concern Christian experience and practice. His subjects were always weighty, and his manner of treating them peculiarly happy, showing the strength and accuracy of his judgment, and ever breathing forth the SPIRIT OF PIETY, and a deep sense of the things he delivered, on his heart. His sermons were none of them mean, but were all solid, wise compositions. His words were none of them vain, but all were weighty.

And you need not be told with what weight the welfare of your souls seemed to lie on his heart, and how he instructed, and reproved, and warned, and exhorted you, with all authority, and with a fatherly, tender concern for your eternal good. And with what wisdom he presided in the house of God, and guided its affairs; and also counselled and directed you in private, under your particular soul exercises and difficulties. You know how he has brought you

up (for most of you have been trained up from your childhood under his ministry), with what authority, and with what judgment, prudence and steadiness, he has conducted you, as well as meekness and gentleness. You know his manner of going in and out among you, how exemplary his walk and conversation has been, with what gravity, judgment and savor of holiness, he has walked before you, as a man of God.

You have enjoyed great advantages for your souls' good, under his ministry: that you had such a minister was your privilege and your honor; he has been an ornament to the town of HATFIELD; and his presence and conversation amongst you has been both profitable and pleasant; for though it was such as did peculiarly command AWE and RESPECT, yet it was at the same time, HUMBLE and CONDESCENDING: it tended both to instruct and entertain those that he conversed with: as a wise man, and endued with knowledge, he *showed out of good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.*

But now it hath pleased a holy God to take him away from you: you will see his face and hear his voice no more, in the land of the living: you will no more have the comfort and benefits of his presence with you, and the exercise of his ministry among you.

Therefore now go to Jesus, the Supreme Head of the church, and *Bishop of souls.* Your pastor is dead, and will not live again till the last day: but Christ, the *chief Shepherd,* though *he was dead,* is *now alive! And behold he lives for evermore. He ever lives* to provide for his church, and to guide and feed his flock. Go to that Jesus whom your deceased pastor preached, and to whom he earnestly invited you while he lived, and give thanks for the many blessings you enjoyed in him. Remember how you have *received and heard,* and *hold fast* that no man take your crown;* and go and *humble yourselves also before him,* that you made no better improvement of the ministry of your pastor while he lived; and beg of him a sanctified improvement of his awful hand in taking him away, and that he would help you to remember his warnings and counsels that you too much slighted whilst you had them, lest those warnings and counsels cry against you, and rise up in judgment against you another day; lest you see your pastor, that so affectionately and earnestly, and so often, and for so long a time continued to exhort you, and earnestly prayed for you, while he lived, rising up in judgment, and bearing testimony against you, declaring how constantly and laboriously he entreated and called upon you, and how obstinately some of you slighted his counsels; and lest you see him sitting with Christ to judge and condemn you, and adoring his awful justice on your aggravated punishment.

All you that have an interest in JESUS, now go to him on this occasion, and tell him of your bereavement, and beg of him that he would not depart from you; but that he would make up his loss in his own immediate presence. Go to him for your surviving pastor, that he would be with him, and furnish him more and more for, and assist him in, that great work, that is now wholly devolved upon him, and make him also a *burning and shining light* amongst you, and that you may have of the presence and blessing of JESUS with you and him.

And now, since I am called to speak in the name of Christ on this solemn occasion, I would apply myself to the near relations of the deceased, who are especially to be looked upon, as the bereaved.

God in his holy providence has taken from you one that has been a great blessing, comfort and honor to you, and deservedly very dear to you, and honor-

* Particularly, remember his late affectionate farewell at the *table of the Lord,* not expecting such another opportunity with you. Exhorting you to follow *peace and holiness,* and to *edify one another.*

ed of you. The doctrine we are upon directs you what to do in your present circumstances, viz., to go to JESUS, to go and spread your affliction before an all-sufficient Redeemer.

And particularly I would apply myself to the honored relict, who stood in the nearest relation of any to the deceased, whom God by this awful providence has made a sorrowful widow. Suffer me, honored madam, in your great affliction, to exhibit to you a compassionate Redeemer. God has now taken from you that servant of his, that was the nearest and best friend you had in this world, that was your wise and prudent guide, your affectionate and pleasant companion, who was so great a blessing while he lived, to you and your family, and under Christ, was so much the comfort and support of your life. You see, madam, where your resort must be: your earthly friends can condole your loss, but cannot make it up to you; we must all confess ourselves to be but miserable comforters: but you may go and tell Jesus, and there you may have both support and reparation: his love and his presence is far beyond that of the nearest and most affectionate earthly friend. Now you are bereaved of your earthly consort, you may go to a spiritual husband, and seek his compassion and his company: he is the fountain of all that wisdom and prudence, that piety, that tender affection and faithful care, that you enjoyed in your departed consort; in him is an infinite fountain of all these things, and of all good; in him you may have light in your darkness, comfort in your sorrow, and fulness of joy and glory in another world, in an everlasting union with your dear, deceased relative, in the glorious presence of the same *Redeemer, in whose presence is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore.*

This doctrine also directs the bereaved, afflicted children, that are with hearts full of grief, now mourning over a dear departed father, where to go and what to do. You will no longer have your father's wisdom to guide you, his tender love to comfort and delight you, and his affectionate care to guard you and assist you, and his pious and judicious counsels to direct you, and his holy examples set before you, and his fervent, humble, believing prayers with you and for you.

But in the blessed Jesus, your father's Lord and Redeemer, you may have much more, than all those things: your father's virtues, that made him so great a blessing to you, were but the image of what is in Christ.

Therefore go to him in your mourning: go and tell Jesus; tell a compassionate Saviour what has befallen you. Heretofore you have had an earthly father to go to, whose heart was full of tenderness to you; but the heart of his Redeemer is much more tender; his wisdom and his love is infinitely beyond that of any earthly parent. Go to him, and then you will surely find comfort. Go to him and you will find that, though you are bereaved, yet you are not left in any want, you will find that all your wants are supplied, and all your loss made up, and much more than so.

But here I would particularly, in humility, address myself to my honored fathers, the sons of the deceased, that are improved in the same great work of the gospel ministry, or in other public business for the service of their generation. Honored sirs, though it might be more proper for me to come to you for instruction and counsel, than to take it upon me to exhort you, yet as I am one that ought to have a fellow-feeling of your affliction, and to look on myself as a sharer in it, and as you have desired me to speak in the name of Christ, on this occasion, suffer me to mention to you that source of comfort, that infinite fountain of good, one of the larger streams of which, has failed by the death of an earthly father, even the blessed Jesus. You will doubtless acknowledge it as an instance of his great goodness to you, that you have been the sons of such

a father; being sensible that your reputation and serviceableness in your generation, have been, under Christ, very much owing to the great advantages you have been under, by his instructions, counsels and education. And is it not fit that children that have *learned of such a faithful servant of Christ*, and been brought up at his feet, now he is dead, should do as John the Baptist's disciples did, *go and tell Jesus?* From whom you may receive comfort under your bereavement, and from whom you may receive more of that Spirit that dwelt in him, and greater degrees of those virtues he derived from Christ, to cause you to shine brighter, and to make you still greater blessings in your generation. Now death has veiled and hid from sight, a *Star* that shone with *reflected light*, our text and doctrine leads you to the *Sun*, that hath *light in himself*, and shines with infinite, unfailing brightness. And while you go to Jesus, honored sirs, on this occasion for yourselves, I humbly desire your requests to him for us the surviving ministers of this county, that he would be with us, now he has taken from us him that was as a father amongst us.

I nextly would address myself to the surviving pastor of this church. We may well look upon you, Reverend Sir, as one in an especial manner concerned in this awful providence, and that has a large share in the bereavement. You doubtless are sensible what reason you have to bless God for the advantage you have had, in serving in the gospel of Christ, so long as you have done, with the venerable person deceased, as a son with a father, enjoying the benefit of his instructions, counsels and example. And particularly, you will often recollect the affectionate and fatherly counsels he gave you, to diligence and faithfulness in your Lord's work, with encouragement of his protection and assistance to carry you through all difficulties, the last evening of his life. And now, dear sir, God has taken him from you, as he took Elijah from Elisha, and as he took John the Baptist, the New Testament Elijah, from his disciples: therefore now you are directed what to do, viz., *go and tell Jesus;* as those disciples did. You have now a great work devolved upon you; you have him no more, who, while he lived, was as a father to you, to guide and assist you, and take the burthen of your great work from you. Therefore you have nowhere else to go, but to your great Lord and Master, that has sent you to labor in that part of his vineyard, where his aged, and now departed servant was employed, to seek strength and wisdom, and divine influence and assistance from him, and a double portion of that Spirit, that dwelt in your predecessor.

And lastly, the text I am upon may be of direction to us the surviving ministers of this county, what to do on this sorrowful occasion. God has now taken our father and master from our head: he has removed him that has heretofore under Christ been very much *our strength*, that we have been wont to resort to in difficult cases for instruction and direction, and that used to be amongst us from time to time, in our associations, and that we were wont to behold as the head and ornament of those conventions.* Where else can we now go but to Jesus, the ever living Head of the whole church, and Lord of the whole harvest, the fountain of light, our great Lord and Master that sends all gospel ministers, and on whom they universally depend? Let this awful providence bring us to look to Christ, to seek more of his presence with us; and that HE would preside as Head in our associations: let it bring us to a more

* Very worthy of our notice was that his farewell message sent us by one of our beloved brethren the Rev. Mr. Williams of Springfield) after he returned from such a meeting, where he also preached.—"I do not expect," said he, "to be with you another Association Meeting: but I give you this advice, Love your Master, love your work and love one another." How very expressive of his own spirit! Like John the beloved disciple.

immediate and entire dependence upon him, for instruction and direction, in all our difficulties.

Let us on this occasion consider what God has done in this country of late years: it was not many years ago that the country was filled with aged ministers, that were our fathers; *but our fathers, where are they* ?—What a great alteration is made in a little time, in the churches in this part of the land ![†] How frequent of late have been the warnings of this kind that God has given us to prepare to give up our account! Let us go to Jesus, and seek grace of him that we may be faithful while we live, and that he would assist us in our great work, that when we also are called hence, we may *give up our account with joy and not with grief*, and that hereafter we may meet those our fathers, that have gone before us in the faithful labors of the gospel, and that we may shine forth with them, *as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars forever and ever.*

† The Rev. Mr. Stoddard, Mr. Taylor Mr. Williams of Deerfield, Mr. Brewer, and lately have died, Mr. Bull of Westfield and Mr Devotion of Suffield

SERMON VI.*

TRUE SAINTS, WHEN ABSENT FROM THE BODY, ARE PRESENT WITH THE LORD.

2 CORINTHIANS v. 3.—We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

THE apostle in this place is giving a reason why he went on with so much boldness and immovable steadfastness, through such labors, sufferings, and dangers of his life, in the service of his Lord; for which his enemies, the false teachers among the Corinthians, sometimes reproached him as being beside himself, and driven on by a kind of madness. In the latter part of the preceding chapter, the apostle informs the Christian Corinthians, that the reason why he did thus, was, that he firmly believed the promises that Christ had made to his faithful servants of a glorious future eternal reward, and knew that these present afflictions were light, and but for a moment, in comparison of that far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. The same discourse is continued in this chapter; wherein the apostle further insists on the reason he had given of his constancy in suffering, and exposing himself to death in the work of the ministry, even the more happy state he expected after death. And this is the subject of the text; wherein may be observed,

1. The great future privilege, which the apostle hoped for; that of being present with Christ. The words, in the original, properly signify dwelling with Christ, as in the same country or city, or making a home with Christ.

2. When the apostle looked for this privilege, viz., when he should be absent from the body. Not to wait for it till the resurrection, when soul and body should be united again. He signifies the same thing in his epistle to the Philippians, chap. i. 22, 23: "But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labor. Yet what I shall choose, I wot not. For I am in a strait between two; having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ."

3. The value the apostle set on this privilege. It was such, that for the sake of it, he chose to be absent from the body. He was willing rather, or (as the word properly signifies) it were more pleasing to him, to part with the present life, and all its enjoyments, and be possessed of this great benefit, than to continue here.

4. The present benefit, which the apostle had by his faith and hope of this future privilege, and of his great value for it, viz., that hence he received courage, assurance, and constancy of mind, agreeable to the proper import of the word that is rendered, we are confident. The apostle is now giving a reason of that fortitude and immovable stability of mind, with which he went through those extreme labors, hardships and dangers, which he mentions in this discourse; so that, in the midst of all, he did not faint, was not discouraged, but had constant light, and inward support, strength, and comfort in the midst of all: agreeable to the 10th verse of the foregoing chapter, "For which cause, we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day."

* Preached on the day of the funeral of the Rev. Mr. David Brainerd, Missionary to the Indians from the Honorable Society in Scotland for the propagation of Christian Knowledge, and Pastor of a Church of Christian Indians in New Jersey; who died at Northampton, in New England, October 9, 1747, in the 30th year of his age, and was interred on the 12th following.

And the same is expressed more particularly in the 8th, 9th, and 10th verses, of that chapter: "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body, the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh." And in the next chapter, verses 4—10: "In all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings, by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."

Among the many useful observations there might be raised from the text, I shall at this time only insist on that which lies most plainly before us in the words, viz., this:

The souls of true saints, when they leave their bodies at death, go to be with Christ

Departed souls of saints go to be with Christ, in the following respects:

I. They go to dwell in the same blessed abode with the glorified human nature of Christ.

The human nature of Christ is yet in being. He still continues, and will continue to all eternity, to be both God and man. His whole human nature remains: not only his human soul, but also his human body. His dead body rose from the dead; and the same that was raised from the dead, is exalted and glorified at God's right hand; that which was dead is now alive, and lives for evermore.

And therefore there is a a certain place, a particular part of the external creation, to which Christ is gone, and where he remains. And this place is that which we call the highest heaven, or the heaven of heavens; a place beyond all the visible heavens. Eph. iv. 9, 10, "Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended, is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens." This is the same which the apostle calls the third heaven, 2 Cor. xii. 2, reckoning the aerial heaven as the first, the starry heaven as the second, and the highest heaven as the third. This is the abode of the holy angels; they are called "the angels of heaven," Matt. xxiv. 36; "The angels which are in heaven," Mark xiii. 32; "The angels of God in heaven," Matt. xxii. 30, and Mark xii. 25. They are said "always to behold the face of the Father which is in heaven," Matt. xviii. 10. And they are elsewhere often represented as before the throne of God, or surrounding his throne in heaven, and sent from thence, and descending from thence on messages to this world. And thither it is that the souls of departed saints are conducted, when they die. They are not reserved in some abode distinct from the highest heaven; a place of rest, which they are kept in, till the day of judgment; such as some imagine, which they call the hades of the happy: but they go directly to heaven itself. This is the saints' home, being their Father's house: they are pilgrims and strangers on the earth, and this is the other and better country that they are travelling to, Heb. xi. 13—16. This is the city they belong to: Philip. iii. 20, "Our conversation, or (as the word properly signifies) citizenship, is in heaven." Therefore this undoubt-

edly is the place the apostle has respect to in my text, when he says, "We are willing to forsake our former house, the body, and to dwell in the same house, city or country, wherein Christ dwells;" which is the proper import of the words of the original. What can this house, or city, or country be, but that house, which is elsewhere spoken of, as their proper home, and their Father's house, and the city and country to which they properly belong, and whither they are travelling all the while they continue in this world, and the house, city, and country where we know the human nature of Christ is? This is the saints' rest; here their hearts are while they live; and here their treasure is. "The inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, that is designed for them, is reserved in heaven," 1 Pet. i. 4; and therefore they never can have their proper and full rest till they come here. So that undoubtedly their souls, when absent from their bodies (when the Scriptures represent them as in a state of perfect rest), arrive hither. Those two saints, that left this world, to go to their rest in another world, without dying, viz., Enoch and Elijah, went to heaven. Elijah was seen ascending up to heaven, as Christ was. And to the same resting place, is there all reason to think, that those saints go, that leave the world, to go to their rest, by death. Moses, when he died in the top of the mount, ascended to the same glorious abode with Elias, who ascended without dying. They are companions in another world; as they appeared together at Christ's transfiguration. They were together at that time with Christ in the mount, when there was a specimen or sample of his glorification in heaven. And doubtless they were also together afterwards, with him, when he was, actually, fully glorified in heaven. And thither undoubtedly it was, that the soul of Stephen ascended, when he expired. The circumstances of his death demonstrate it, as we have an account of it, Acts vii. 55, &c.: "He, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man (i. e. Jesus, in his human nature) standing on the right hand of God. Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out of the city, and stoned him. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Before his death he had an extraordinary view of the glory that his Saviour had received in heaven, not only for himself, but for him, and all his faithful followers; that he might be encouraged, by the hopes of this glory, cheerfully to lay down his life for his sake. Accordingly he dies in the hope of this, saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." By which doubtless he meant, "receive my spirit to be with thee, in that glory, wherein I have now seen thee, in heaven, at the right hand of God." And thither it was that the soul of the penitent thief on the cross ascended. Christ said to him, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Paradise is the same with the third heaven; as appears by 2 Cor. xii. 2, 3, 4. There that which is called the third heaven in the 2d verse, in the 4th verse is called paradise. The departed souls of the apostles and prophets are in heaven; as is manifest from Rev. xviii. 20: "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets."

The church of God is distinguished in Scripture, from time to time, into these two parts; that part of it that is in heaven, and that which is in earth; Eph. iii. 14, 15, "Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." Col. i. 20, "And having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself, by him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven." Now what things in heaven are they for whom peace has been made by the blood of Christ's cross, and who have by him been

reconciled to God, but the saints in heaven? In like manner we read, Eph. i. 10, of "God's gathering together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him." The spirits of just men made perfect are in the same city of the living God, and heavenly Jerusalem, with the innumerable company of angels, and Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant; as is manifest by Heb. xii. 22, 23, 24. The church of God is often in Scripture called by the name Jerusalem; and the apostle speaks of the Jerusalem which is above, or which is in heaven, as the mother of us all; but if no part of the church be in heaven, or none but Enoch and Elias, it is not likely that the church would be called the Jerusalem which is in heaven.

II. The souls of true saints, when they leave their bodies at death, go to be with Christ, as they go to dwell in the immediate, full and constant sight or view of him.

When we are absent from our dear friends, they are out of sight; but when we are with them, we have the opportunity and satisfaction of seeing them. So while the saints are in the body, and are absent from the Lord, HE is in several respects out of sight: 1 Pet. i. 8, "Whom having not seen, ye love: in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing," &c. They have indeed, in this world, a spiritual sight of Christ; but they see through a glass darkly, and with great interruption; but in heaven they see him face to face, 1 Cor. xiii. 12; "The pure in heart are blessed; for they shall see God," Matt. v. 8. Their beatifical vision of God is in Christ, who is that brightness or effulgence of God's glory, by which his glory shines forth in heaven, to the view of saints and angels there, as well as here on earth. This is the Sun of righteousness, that is not only the light of this world, but is also the sun that enlightens the heavenly Jerusalem; by whose bright beams it is that the glory of God shines forth there, to the enlightening and making happy all the glorious inhabitants. "The Lamb is the light thereof; and so the glory of God doth lighten it," Rev. xxi. 23. None sees God the Father immediately, who is the King eternal, immortal, invisible; Christ is the image of that invisible God, by which he is seen by all elect creatures. The only begotten Son that is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him, and manifested him. None has ever immediately seen the Father, but the Son; and none else sees the Father any other way, than by the Son's revealing him. And in heaven, the spirits of just men made perfect do see him as he is. They behold his glory. They see the glory of his divine nature, consisting in all the glory of the Godhead, the beauty of all his perfections; his great majesty, almighty power, his infinite wisdom, holiness, and grace, and they see the beauty of his glorified human nature, and the glory which the Father hath given him, as God-man and Mediator. For this end, Christ desired that his saints might "be with him, that they might behold his glory," John xvii. 24. And when the souls of the saints leave their bodies, to go to be with Christ, they behold the marvellous glory of that great work of his, the work of redemption, and of the glorious way of salvation by him; which the angels desire to look into. They have a most clear view of the unfathomable depths of the manifold wisdom and knowledge of God; and the most bright displays of the infinite purity and holiness of God, that do appear in that way and work; and see in a much clearer manner than the saints do here, what is the breadth and length, and depth and height of the grace and love of Christ, appearing in his redemption. And as they see the unspeakable riches and glory of the attribute of God's grace, so they most clearly behold and understand Christ's eternal and unmeasurable dying love to them in particular. And in short, they see every thing in Christ that tends to kindle and inflame love,

and every thing that tends to gratify love, and every thing that tends to satisfy them: and that in the most clear and glorious manner, without any darkness or delusion, without any impediment or interruption. Now the saints, while in the body, see something of Christ's glory and love; as we, in the dawning of the morning, see something of the reflected light of the sun mingled with darkness; but when separated from the body, they see their glorious and loving Redeemer, as we see the sun when risen, and showing his whole disk above the horizon, by his direct beams, in a clear hemisphere, and with perfect day.

III. The souls of true saints, when absent from the body, go to be with Jesus Christ, as they are brought into a most perfect conformity to and union with him. Their spiritual conformity is begun while they are in the body; here beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, they are changed into the same image; but when they come to see him as he is, in heaven, then they become like him in another manner. That perfect sight will abolish all remains of deformity, disagreement, and sinful unlikeness; as all darkness is abolished before the full blaze of the sun's meridian light: it is impossible that the least degree of obscurity should remain before such light; so it is impossible the least degree of sin and spiritual deformity should remain, in such a view of the spiritual beauty and glory of Christ, as the saints enjoy in heaven; when they see that Sun of righteousness without a cloud, they themselves shine forth as the sun, and shall be as little suns, without a spot. For then is come the time when Christ presents his saints to himself, in glorious beauty; "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing;" and having holiness without a blemish. And then the saints' union with Christ is perfected. This also is begun in this world. The relative union is both begun and perfected at once, when the soul first closes with Christ by faith: the real union, consisting in the union of hearts and affections, and in the vital union, is begun in this world and perfected in the next. The union of the heart of a believer to Christ, is begun when his heart is drawn to Christ, by the first discovery of divine excellency, at conversion; and consequent on this drawing and closing of his heart with Christ, is established a vital union with Christ; whereby the believer becomes a living branch of the true vine, living by a communication of the sap and vital juice of the stock and root; and a member of Christ's mystical body, living by a communication of spiritual and vital influences from the head, and by a kind of participation of Christ's own life. But while the saints are in the body, there is much remaining distance between Christ and them: there are remainders of alienation, and the vital union is very imperfect; and so consequently is the communication of spiritual life and vital influences: there is much between Christ and believers to keep them asunder, much indwelling sin, much temptation, a world of carnal objects, to keep off the soul from Christ, and hinder a perfect coalescence.

But when the soul leaves the body, all these clogs and hinderances shall be removed, every separating wall shall be broken down, and every impediment taken out of the way, and all distance shall cease; the heart shall be wholly and perfectly drawn, and most firmly and forever attached and bound to him, by a perfect view of his glory. And the vital union shall then be brought to perfection; the soul shall live perfectly in and upon Christ, being perfectly filled with his spirit, and animated by his vital influences; living, as it were, only by Christ's life, without any remainder of spiritual death, or carnal life.

IV. Departed souls of saints are with Christ, as they enjoy a glorious and immediate intercourse and converse with him.

While we are present with our friends, we have opportunity for that free

and immediate conversation with them, which we cannot have in absence from them. And therefore, by reason of the vastly more free, perfect, and immediate intercourse with Christ, which the saints enjoy when absent from the body, they are fitly represented as present with him.

The most intimate intercourse becomes that relation that the saints stand in to Jesus Christ; and especially becomes that most perfect and glorious union they shall be brought into with him in heaven. They are not merely Christ's servants, but his friends, John xv. 15. His brethren and companions, Psalm cxxii. 8; "yea, they are the spouse of Christ." They are espoused or betrothed to Christ while in the body; but when they go to heaven, they enter into the king's palace, their marriage with him is come, and the king brings them into his chambers indeed. They then go to dwell with Christ constantly, to enjoy the most perfect converse with him. Christ conversed in the most friendly manner with his disciples on earth; he admitted one of them to lean on his bosom: but they are admitted much more fully and freely to converse with him in heaven. Though Christ be there in a state of glorious exaltation, reigning in the majesty and glory of the sovereign Lord and God of heaven and earth, angels and men; yet this will not hinder intimacy and freedom of intercourse, but rather promote it. For he is thus exalted, not only for himself, but for them; he is instated in this glory of head over all things for their sakes, that they might be exalted and glorified; and when they go to heaven where he is, they are exalted and glorified with him; and shall not be kept at a more awful distance from Christ, but shall be admitted nearer, and to a greater intimacy. For they shall be unspeakably more fit for it, and Christ in more fit circumstances to bestow on them this blessedness. Their seeing the great glory of their friend and Redeemer, will not awe them to a distance, and make them afraid of a near approach; but on the contrary, will most powerfully draw them near, and encourage and engage them to holy freedom. For they will know that it is he that is their own Redeemer, and beloved friend and bridegroom; the very same that loved them with a dying love, and redeemed them to God by his blood; Matt. xiv. 27, "It is I; be not afraid." Rev. i. 17, 18, "Fear not:—I am he that liveth, and was dead." And the nature of this glory of Christ that they shall see, will be such as will draw and encourage them; for they will not only see infinite majesty and greatness, but infinite grace, condescension, and mildness, and gentleness and sweetness, equal to his majesty. For he appears in heaven, not only as "the Lion of the tribe of Judah, but as the Lamb, and the Lamb in the midst of the throne," Rev. v. 5, 6; and this Lamb in the midst of the throne shall be their shepherd, to "feed them, and lead them to living fountains of water," Rev. vii. 17; so that the sight of Christ's great kingly majesty will be no terror to them; but will only serve the more to heighten their pleasure and surprise. When Mary was about to embrace Christ, being full of joy at the sight of him again alive after his crucifixion, Christ forbids her to do it for the present; because he was not yet ascended: John xx. 16, 17, "Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni, which is to say, Master. Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not: for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God and your God." As if he had said, "This is not the time and place for that freedom your love to me desires: this is appointed in heaven after my ascension. I am going thither; and you that are my true disciples, shall, as my brethren and companions, soon be there with me in my glory. And then there shall be no restraint. That is the place appointed for the most perfect expressions of complacence and endearment, and

full enjoyment of mutual love." And accordingly the souls of departed saints with Christ in heaven, shall have Christ as it were unbosomed unto them, manifesting those infinite riches of love towards them, that have been there from eternity; and they shall be enabled to express their love to him, in an infinitely better manner than ever they could while in the body. Thus they shall eat and drink abundantly, and swim in the ocean of love, and be eternally swallowed up in the infinitely bright, and infinitely mild and sweet beams of divine love; eternally receiving that light, eternally full of it, and eternally compassed round with it, and everlastingly reflecting it back again to the fountain of it.

V. The souls of the saints, when they leave their bodies at death, go to be with Christ, as they are received to a glorious fellowship with Christ in his blessedness.

As the wife is received to a joint possession of her husband's estate, and as the wife of a prince partakes with him in his princely possessions and honors; so the church, the spouse of Christ, when the marriage comes, and she is received to dwell with him in heaven, shall partake with him in his glory. When Christ rose from the dead, and took possession of eternal life; this was not as a private person, but as the public head of all his redeemed people. He took possession of it for them, as well as for himself; and "they are quickened together with him, and raised up together." And so when he ascended into heaven, and was exalted to great glory there, this also was as a public person. He took possession of heaven, not only for himself, but his people, as their forerunner and head, that they might ascend also, "and sit together in heavenly places with him," Eph. ii. 5, 6. "Christ writes upon them his new name," Rev. iii. 12; i. e., he makes them partakers of his own glory and exaltation in heaven. His new name is that new honor and glory that the Father invested him with, when he set him on his own right hand. As a prince, when he advances any one to new dignity in his kingdom, gives him a new title. Christ and his saints shall be glorified together, Rom. viii. 17.

The saints in heaven have communion, or a joint participation with Christ in his glory and blessedness in heaven, in the following respects more especially.

1. They partake with him in the ineffable delights he has in heaven, in the enjoyment of his Father.

When Christ ascended into heaven, he was received to a glorious and peculiar joy and blessedness in the enjoyment of his Father, who, in his passion, hid his face from him; such an enjoyment as became the relation he stood in to the Father, and such as was a meet reward for the great and hard service he had performed on earth. Then "God showed him the path of life, and brought him into his presence, where is fulness of joy, and to sit on his right hand, where there are pleasures for evermore," as is said of Christ, Psalm xvi. 11. Then the Father "made him most blessed forever. He made him exceeding glad with his countenance;" as in Psalm xxi. 6. The saints, by virtue of their union with Christ, and being his members, do, in some sort partake of his childlike relation to the Father; and so are heirs with him of his happiness in the enjoyment of his Father; as seems to be intimated by the apostle, in Gal. iv. 4—7. The spouse of Christ, by virtue of her espousals to that only begotten Son of God, is, as it were, a partaker of his filial relation to God, and becomes the king's daughter, Psalm xlv. 13, and so partakes with her divine husband in his enjoyment of his Father and her Father, his God and her God." A promise of this seems to be implied in those words of Christ to Mary, John xx. 17 Thus Christ's faithful servants "enter into the joy of their Lord," Matt. xxv. 21, 23, and "Christ's joy remains in them;" agreeably to those words of Christ,

John xv. 11. Christ from eternity is, as it were, in the bosom of the Father, as the object of his infinite complacence. In him is the Father's eternal happiness. Before the world was, he was with the Father, in the enjoyment of his infinite love; and had infinite delight and blessedness in that enjoyment; as he declares of himself in Prov. viii. 30: "Then I was by him, as one brought up with him. And I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him." And when Christ ascended to the Father after his passion, he went to him, to the enjoyment of the same glory and blessedness in the enjoyment of his love; agreeably to his prayer the evening before his crucifixion, John xvii. 5: "And now, O Father, glorify me with thine own self, with the glory I had with thee before the world was." And in the same prayer, he manifests it to be his will, that his true disciples should be with him in the enjoyment of that joy and glory, which he then asked for himself, verse 13: "That my joy might be fulfilled in themselves:" verse 22, "And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them." This glory of Christ, which the saints are to enjoy with him, is that which he has in the enjoyment of the Father's infinite love to him; as appears by the last words of that prayer of our Lord, verse 26: "That the love wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them, and I in them." The love which the Father has to his Son is great indeed: the Deity does, as it were, wholly and entirely flow out in a stream of love to Christ; and the joy and pleasure of Christ is proportionably great. This is the stream of Christ's delights, the river of his infinite pleasure; which he will make his saints to drink of with him, agreeably to Psal. xxxvi. 8, 9: "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house. Thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures. For with thee is the fountain of life. In thy light shall we see light." The saints shall have pleasure in partaking with Christ in his pleasure, and shall see light in his light. They shall partake with Christ of the same river of pleasure, shall drink of the same water of life, and of the same new wine in Christ's Father's kingdom, Matt. xxvi. 29. That new wine is especially that joy and happiness that Christ and his true disciples shall partake of together in glory, which is the purchase of Christ's blood, or the reward of his obedience unto death. Christ, at his ascension into heaven, received everlasting pleasures at his Father's right hand, and in the enjoyment of his Father's love, as the reward of his own death, or obedience unto death. But the same righteousness is reckoned to both head and members; and both shall have fellowship in the same reward, each according to their distinct capacity.

That the saints in heaven have such a communion with Christ in his joy, and do so partake with him in his own enjoyment of the Father, does greatly manifest the transcendent excellency of their happiness, and their being admitted to a vastly higher privilege in glory than the angels.

2. The saints in heaven are received to a fellowship or participation with Christ in the glory of that dominion to which the Father hath exalted him.

The saints, when they ascend to heaven as Christ ascended, and are made to sit together with him in heavenly places, and are partakers of the glory of his exaltation, are exalted to reign with him. They are through him made kings and priests, and reign with him, and in him, over the same kingdom. As the Father hath appointed unto him a kingdom, so he has appointed to them. The Father has appointed the Son to reign over his own kingdom, and the Son appoints his saints to reign in his. The Father has given to Christ to sit with him on his throne, and Christ gives to the saints to sit with him on his throne, agreeably to Christ's promise, Rev. iii. 21. Christ, as God's Son, is the heir of his kingdom, and the saints are joint heirs with Christ; which implies, that they

are heirs of the same inheritance, to possess the same kingdom, in and with him, according to their capacity. Christ, in his kingdom, reigns over heaven and earth; he is appointed the heir of all things; and so all things are the saints'; "whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come," all are theirs; because they are Christ's, and united to him, 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22, 23. The angels are given to Christ as a part of his dominion: they are all given to wait upon him as ministering spirits to him. So also they are all, even the highest and most dignified of them, ministering spirits, to minister to them who are the heirs of salvation. They are Christ's angels, and they are also their angels. Such is the saints' union with Christ, and their interest in him, that what he possesses, they possess, in a much more perfect and blessed manner than if all things were given to them separately, and by themselves, to be disposed of according to their discretion. They are now disposed of so as, in every respect, to be most for their blessedness, by an infinitely better discretion than their own; and in being disposed of by their head and husband, between whom and them there is the most perfect union of hearts, and so the most perfect union of wills, and who are most perfectly each other's.

As the glorified spouse of this great King reigns with and in him, in his dominion over the universe, so more especially does she partake with him in the joy and glory of his reign in his kingdom of grace; which is more peculiarly the kingdom that he possesses as Head of the church, and is that kingdom wherein she is more especially interested. It was especially to reign in this kingdom, that God the Father exalted him to his throne in heaven: he set his King on his holy hill of Zion, especially that he might reign over Zion, or over his church, in his kingdom of grace; and that he might be under the best advantages to carry on the designs of his love in this lower world. And therefore undoubtedly the saints in heaven are partakers with Christ in the joy and glory of the advancement and prosperity of his kingdom of grace on earth, and success of his gospel here, which he looks on as the peculiar glory of his reign.

The good shepherd rejoices when he finds but one sheep that was lost; and his friends and neighbors in heaven rejoice with him on that occasion. That part of the family that is in heaven is surely not unacquainted with the affairs of that part of the same family that is on earth. They that are with the King and are next to him, the royal family, that dwell in his palace, are not kept in ignorance of the affairs of his kingdom. The saints in heaven are with the angels, the King's ministers, by which he manages the affairs of his kingdom, and who are continually ascending and descending from heaven to the earth, and one or other of them daily employed as ministering spirits to each individual member of the church below: besides the continual ascending of the souls of departed saints from all parts of the militant church. On these accounts the saints in heaven must needs be under a thousand times greater advantage than we here, for a full view of the state of the church on earth, and a speedy, direct, and certain acquaintance with all its affairs in every part. And that which gives them much greater advantage for such an acquaintance than the things already mentioned, is their being constantly in the immediate presence of Christ, and in the enjoyment of the most perfect intercourse with him, who is the King who manages all these affairs, and has an absolutely perfect knowledge of them. Christ is the head of the whole glorified assembly; they are mystically his glorified body: and what the head sees, it sees for the information of the whole body, according to its capacity: and what the head enjoys, is for the joy of the whole body.

The saints, in leaving this world, and ascending to heaven, do not go out of sight of things appertaining to Christ's kingdom on earth; but, on the contrary, they go out of a state of obscurity, and ascend above the mists and clouds into the clearest light: to a pinnacle in the very centre of light, where every thing appears in clear view. They have as much greater advantage to view the state of Christ's kingdom, and the works of the new creation here, than while they were in this world, as a man that ascends to the top of a high mountain has a greater advantage to view the face of the earth, than he had while he was in a deep valley, or thick forest below, surrounded on every side with those things that impeded and limited his sight. Nor do they view as indifferent or unconcerned spectators, any more than Christ himself is an unconcerned spectator.

The happiness of the saints in heaven consists very much in beholding the glory of God appearing in the work of redemption: for it is by this chiefly that God manifests his glory, the glory of his wisdom, holiness, grace, and other perfections, to both saints and angels; as is apparent by many Scriptures. And therefore undoubtedly their happiness consists very much in beholding the progress of this work in its application and success, and the steps by which infinite power and wisdom bring it to its consummation. And the saints in heaven are under unspeakably greater advantage to take the pleasure of beholding the progress of this work on earth than we are that are here; as they are under greater advantages to see and understand the marvellous steps that Divine Wisdom takes in all that is done, and the glorious ends he obtains, the opposition Satan makes, and how he is baffled and overthrown. They can better see the connection of one event with another, and the beautiful order of all things that come to pass in the church in different ages that to us appear like confusion. Nor do they only view these things, and rejoice in them, as a glorious and beautiful sight, but as persons interested, as Christ is interested; as possessing these things in Christ, and reigning with him, in this kingdom. Christ's success in his work of redemption, in bringing home souls to himself, applying his saving benefits by his Spirit, and the advancement of the kingdom of grace in the world, is the reward especially promised to him by his Father in the covenant of redemption, for the hard and difficult service he performed while in the form of a servant; as is manifest by Isai. liii. 10, 11, 12. But the saints shall be rewarded with him: they shall partake with him in the joy of this reward; for this obedience that is thus rewarded is reckoned to them as they are his members, as was before observed. This was especially the joy that was set before Christ, for the sake of which he endured the cross and despised the shame. And his joy is the joy of all heaven. They that are with him in heaven are under much the greatest advantages to partake with him in this joy; for they have a perfect communion with him through whom, and in fellowship with whom, they enjoy and possess their whole inheritance, all their heavenly happiness; as much as the whole body has all its pleasure of music by the ear, and all the pleasure of its food by the mouth and stomach; and all the benefit and refreshment of the air by the lungs. The saints while on earth pray and labor for the same thing that Christ labored for, viz., the advancement of the kingdom of God among men, the promoting the prosperity of Zion, and flourishing of religion in this world; and most of them have suffered for that end as Christ did, have been made partakers with their head in his sufferings, and "filled up (as the apostle expresses it) that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ:" and therefore they shall partake with him of the glory and joy of the end obtained. Rom. viii. 17, "We are joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him,

that we may be also glorified together." 2 Tim. ii. 12, "If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him." Christ, when his sufferings were past, and he left the earth and ascended into heaven, was so far from having done with his kingdom in this world, that it was as it were but then begun: and he ascended for that very end, that he might more fully possess and enjoy this kingdom, that he might reign in it, and be under the best advantages for it; as much as a king ascends a throne in order to reign over his people, and receive the honor and glory of his dominion. No more have the saints done with Christ's kingdom on earth, when they leave the earth and ascend into heaven. "Christ came (i. e., ascended) with clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and was brought near before him, to the very end, that he might receive dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages, should serve him," Dan. vii. 13, 14. Which shall be eminently fulfilled after the ruin of Antichrist, which is especially the time of Christ's kingdom. And the same is the time when "the kingdom and dominion, and greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High God;" as verse 27, in the same chapter. It is because they shall reign in and with Christ, the Most High, as seems intimated in the words that follow; "whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him." This verse is true, not only of the saints on earth, but also the saints in heaven. Hence the saints in heaven, having respect to this time, do sing, in Rev. v. 10, "We shall reign on the earth." And agreeably hereto, it is afterwards represented, that when the forementioned time comes, the souls of them that in former ages had suffered with Christ do reign with Christ; having as it were given to them new life and joy, in that spiritual blessed resurrection, which shall then be of the church of God on earth; and thus it is that it is said, Matt. v. 5, "The meek (those that meekly and patiently suffer with Christ, and for his sake) shall inherit the earth:" they shall inherit it, and reign on earth with Christ. Christ is the heir of the world; and when the appointed time of his kingdom comes, his inheritance shall be given him, and then the meek, who are joint heirs, shall inherit the earth. The place in the Old Testament whence the words are taken, leads to a true interpretation of them. Psal. xxxvii. 11, "The meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace." That there is reference in these latter words, "the abundance of peace," to the peace and blessedness of the latter days, we may be satisfied by comparing these words with Psal. lxxii. 7, "In his days shall be abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth:" and Jer. xxxiii. 6, "I will reveal to them the abundance of peace and truth:" also Isai. ii. 4, Micah iv. 3, Isai. xi. 6—9, and many other parallel places. The saints in heaven will be as much with Christ in reigning over the nations, and in the glory of his dominion at that time, as they will be with him in the honor of judging the world at the last day. That promise of Christ to his disciples, Matt. xix. 28, 29, seems to have a special respect to the former of these. In verse 28, Christ promises to the disciples, that hereafter, "when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of his glory, they shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." The saints in heaven reigning on earth in the glorious latter day, is described in language accommodated to this promise of Christ, Rev. xx. 4: "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them; and judgment was given them. And they reigned with Christ." And the promise in the next verse, in that xixth of Matthew, seems to have its fulfillment at the same time: "And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or fathers, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake shall receive a

hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life;" i. e., in the time when the saints shall inherit the earth and reign on earth, the earth, with all its blessings and good things, shall be given in great abundance to the church, to be possessed by the saints. This shall they receive in this present world, and in the time to come everlasting life. The saints in heaven shall partake with Christ in the triumph and glory of those victories that he shall obtain in that future glorious time, over the kings and nations of the world, that are sometimes represented by his ruling them with a rod of iron, and dashing them in pieces as a potter's vessel. Which doubtless there is respect to in Rev. ii. 26, 27: "He that overcometh, and keepeth my words unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: (and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessel of a potter shall they be broken to shivers:) even as I received of my Father." And Psal. cxlix. 5, to the end: "Let the saints be joyful in glory; let them sing aloud upon their beds;" i. e., in their separate state after death; compare Isai. lvii. 1, 2. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand: to execute vengeance upon the Heathen, and punishments upon the people; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron, to execute upon them the judgment written: this honor have all the saints." Accordingly when Christ appears riding forth to his victory over Antichrist, Rev. xix., the hosts of heaven appear going forth with him in robes of triumph, verse 14. And when Antichrist is destroyed, the inhabitants of heaven, and the holy apostles and prophets, are called upon to rejoice, chap. xviii. 20. And accordingly the whole multitude of the inhabitants of heaven, on that occasion, do appear to exult and praise God with exceeding joy, chap. xix. 1– 8, and chap. xi. 15; and are also represented as greatly rejoicing on occasion of the ruin of the heathen empire, in the days of Constantine, chap xii. 10.

And it is observable all along in the visions of that book, the hosts of heaven appear as much concerned and interested in the events appertaining to the kingdom of Christ here below, as the saints on earth. The day of the commencement of the church's latter day glory is eminently "the day of Christ's espousals; the day of the gladness of his heart, when as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so he will rejoice over his church." And then will all heaven exceedingly rejoice with him. And therefore they say at that time, Rev. xix. 7, "Let us be glad, and rejoice, and give glory to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come."

Thus Abraham enjoys these things when they come to pass, that were of old promised to him, and that he saw beforehand, and rejoiced in. He will enjoy the fulfilment of the promise of all the families of the earth being blessed in his seed, when it shall be accomplished. And all the ancient patriarchs, who died in faith of promises of glorious things that should be accomplished in this world, "who had not received the promises, but saw them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them," do actually enjoy them when fulfilled. David actually saw and enjoyed the fulfilment of that promise, in its due time, which was made to him many hundred years before, and was all his salvation and all his desire. Thus Daniel shall stand in his lot at the end of the days pointed out by his own prophecy. Thus the saints of old that died in faith, not having received the promises, are made perfect, and have their faith crowned by the better things accomplished in these latter days of the gospel, Heb. xi. 39, 40, which they see and enjoy in their time.

3. The departed souls of saints have fellowship with Christ, in his blessed and eternal employment of glorifying the Father.

The happiness of heaven consists not only in contemplation, and a mere passive enjoyment, but consists very much in action. And particularly in actively serving and glorifying God. This is expressly mentioned as a great part of the blessedness of the saints in their most perfect state, Rev. xxii. 3: "And shere shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him." The angels are as a flame of fire in their ardor and activity in God's service: the four animals, Rev. iv. (which are generally supposed to signify the angels), are represented as continually giving praise and glory to God, and are said not to rest day nor night, verse 8. The souls of departed saints are, doubtless, become as the angels of God in heaven in this respect. And Jesus Christ is the head of the whole glorious assembly; as in other things appertaining to their blessed state, so in this of their praising and glorifying the Father. When Christ, the night before he was crucified, prayed for his exaltation to glory, it was that he might glorify the Father: John xvii. 1, "These words spake Jesus, and lift up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come, glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee." And this he doubtless does, now he is in heaven; not only in fulfilling the Father's will, in what he does as head of the church and ruler of the universe, but also in leading the heavenly assembly in their praises. When Christ instituted the Supper, and ate and drank with his disciples at his table (giving them therein a representation and pledge of their future feasting with him, and drinking new wine in his heavenly Father's kingdom), he at that time led them in their praises to God, in that hymn that they sang. And so doubtless he leads his glorified disciples in heaven. David was the sweet psalmist of Israel, and he led the great congregation of God's people in their songs of praise. Herein, as well as in innumerable other things, he was a type of Christ, who is often spoken of in Scripture by the name of David. And many of the psalms that David penned, were songs of praise, that he, by the spirit of prophecy, uttered in the name of Christ, as Head of the church, and leading the saints in their praises. Christ in heaven leads the glorious assembly in their praises to God, as Moses did the congregation of Israel at the Red Sea; which is implied in its being said, that "they sing the song of Moses and the Lamb," Rev. xv. 2, 3. In Rev. xix. 5, John tells us, that "he heard a voice come out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great." Who can it be that utters this voice out of the throne, but the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne, calling on the glorious assembly of saints to praise his Father and their Father, his God and their God? And what the consequence of this voice is, we have an account in the next words: "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia; for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

APPLICATION.

The use that I would make of what has been said on this subject is of EXHORTATION. Let us all be exhorted hence earnestly to seek after that great privilege that has been spoken of, that when "we are absent from the body, we may be present with the Lord." We cannot continue always in these earthly tabernacles: they are very frail, and will soon decay and fall; and are continually liable to be overthrown by innumerable means: our souls must soon leave them, and go into the eternal world. O, how infinitely great will the privilege and happiness of such be, who at that time shall go to be with Christ

in his glory, in the manner that has been represented! The privilege of the twelve disciples was great, in being so constantly with Christ as his family, in his state of humiliation. The privilege of those three disciples was great, who were with him in the mount of his transfiguration; where was exhibited to them some little semblance of his future glory in heaven, such as they might behold in the present frail, feeble, and sinful state: they were greatly entertained and delighted with what they saw; and were for making tabernacles to dwell there, and return no more down the mount. And great was the privilege of Moses when he was with Christ in Mount Sinai, and besought him to show him his glory, and he saw his back parts as he passed by, and proclaimed his name. But is not that privilege infinitely greater, that has now been spoken of, the privilege of being with Christ in heaven, where he sits on the right hand of God, in the glory of the King and God of angels, and of the whole universe, shining forth as the great light, the bright sun of that world of glory; there to dwell in the full, constant and everlasting view of his beauty and brightness; there most freely and intimately to converse with him, and fully to enjoy his love, as his friends and spouse; there to have fellowship with him in the infinite pleasure and joy he has in the enjoyment of his Father; there to sit with him on his throne, and reign with him in the possession of all things, and partake with him in the joy and glory of his victory over his enemies, and the advancement of his kingdom in the world, and to join with him in joyful songs of praise to his Father and their Father, to his God and their God, forever and ever? Is not such a privilege worth the seeking after?

But here, as a special enforcement of this exhortation, I would improve that dispensation of God's holy providence, that is the sorrowful occasion of our coming together at this time, viz., the death of that eminent servant of Jesus Christ, in the work of the gospel-ministry, whose funeral is this day to be attended; together with what was observable in him, living and dying.

In this dispensation of Providence, God puts us in mind of our mortality, and forewarns us that the time is approaching when we must be absent from the body, and "must all appear (as the apostle observes in the next verse but one to my text) before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one of us may receive the things done in the body, according to what we have done, whether it be good or bad."

And in him, whose death we are now called to consider and improve, we have not only an instance of mortality, but an instance of one that, being absent from the body, is present with the Lord; as we have all imaginable reason to conclude. And that, whether we consider the nature of the operations he was under, about the time whence he dates his conversion, or the nature and course of his inward exercises from that time forward, or his outward conversation and practice in life, or his frame and behavior during the whole of that long space wherein he looked death in the face.

His convictions of sin, preceding his first consolations in Christ (as appears by a written account he has left of his inward exercises and experiences), were exceeding deep and thorough: his trouble and exercise of mind, through a sense of guilt and misery, very great and long continued, but yet sound and solid; consisting in no unsteady, violent and unaccountable hurries and frights, and strange perturbations of mind; but arising from the most serious consideration, and proper illumination of the conscience to discern and consider the true state of things. And the light let into his mind at conversion, and the influences and exercises that his mind was subject to at that time, appear very agreeable to reason and the gospel of Jesus Christ; the change very great and re-

markable, without any appearance of strong impressions on the imagination, sudden flights and pangs of the affections, and vehement emotions in animal nature; but attended with proper intellectual views of the supreme glory of the divine Being, consisting in the infinite dignity and beauty of the perfections of his nature, and of the transcendent excellency of the way of salvation by Christ. This was about eight years ago, when he was about twenty-one years of age.

Thus God sanctified and made meet for his use, that vessel that he intended to make eminently a vessel of honor in his house, and which he had made of large capacity, having endowed him with very uncommon abilities and gifts of nature. He was a singular instance of a ready invention, natural eloquence, easy flowing expression, sprightly apprehension, quick discerning, and a very strong memory; and yet of a very penetrating genius, close and clear thought, and piercing judgment. He had an exact taste: his understanding was (if I may so express it) of a quick, strong and distinguishing scent.

His learning was very considerable: he had a great taste for learning; and applied himself to his studies in so close a manner when he was at college, that he much injured his health; and was obliged on that account for a while to leave the college, throw by his studies and return home. He was esteemed one that excelled in learning in that society.

He had an extraordinary knowledge of men, as well as things. Had a great insight into human nature, and excelled most that ever I knew in a communicative faculty: he had a peculiar talent at accommodating himself to the capacities, tempers and circumstances, of those that he would instruct or counsel.

He had extraordinary gifts for the pulpit: I never had opportunity to hear him preach, but have often heard him pray: and I think his manner of addressing himself to God, and expressing himself before him, in that duty, almost inimitable; such (so far as I may judge) as I have very rarely known equalled. He expressed himself with that exact propriety and pertinency, in such significant, weighty, pungent expressions; with that decent appearance of sincerity, reverence, and solemnity, and great distance from all affectation, as forgetting the presence of men, and as being in the immediate presence of a great and holy God, that I have scarcely ever known paralleled. And his manner of preaching, by what I have often heard of it from good judges, was no less excellent; being clear and instructive, natural, nervous, forcible, and moving, and very searching and convincing. He nauseated an affected noisiness, and violent boisterousness in the pulpit; and yet much disrelished a flat, cold delivery, when the subject of discourse, and matter delivered, required affection and earnestness.

Not only had he excellent talents for the study and the pulpit, but also for conversation. He was of a sociable disposition; and was remarkably free, entertaining, and profitable in his ordinary discourse; and had much of a faculty of disputing, defending truth and confuting error.

As he excelled in his judgment and knowledge of things in general, so especially in divinity. He was truly, for one of his standing, an extraordinary divine. But above all, in matters relating to experimental religion. In this, I know I have the concurring opinion of some that have had a name for persons of the best judgment. And according to what ability I have to judge of things of this nature, and according to my opportunities, which of late have been very great, I never knew his equal, of his age and standing, for clear, accurate notions of the nature and essence of true religion, and its distinctions from its various false appearances; which I suppose to be owing to these three

things meeting together in him;—the strength of his natural genius, and the great opportunities he had of observation of others, in various parts, both white people and Indians, and his own great experience.

His experiences of the holy influences of God's Spirit were not only great at his first conversion, but they were so, in a continued course, from that time forward; as appears by a record, or private journal, he kept of his daily inward exercises, from the time of his conversion, until he was disabled by the failing of his strength, a few days before his death. The change which he looked upon as his conversion, was not only a great change of the present views, affections, and frame of his mind; but was evidently the beginning of that work of God on his heart, which God carried on, in a very wonderful manner, from that time to his dying day. He greatly abhorred the way of such, as live on their first work, as though they had now got through their work, and are thenceforward, by degrees, settled in a cold, lifeless, negligent, worldly frame; he had an ill opinion of such persons' religion.*

Oh that the things that were seen and heard in this extraordinary person, his holiness, heavenliness, labor and self-denial in life, his so remarkably devoting himself and his all, in heart and practice, to the glory of God, and the wonderful frame of mind manifested, in so steadfast a manner, under the expectation of death, and the pains and agonies that brought it on, may excite in us all, both ministers and people, a due sense of the greatness of the work we have to do in the world, the excellency and amiableness of thorough religion in experience and practice, and the blessedness of the end of such, whose death finishes such a life, and the infinite value of their eternal reward, when absent from the body and present with the Lord; and effectually stir us up to endeavors, that in the way of such a holy life we may at least come to so blessed an end. AMEN.

* We have omitted a few pages which follow here of this discourse, because what the author communicates, respecting Mr. Brainerd, is to be found almost in the same words in the Memoirs of his life, and in his Reflections upon it, which he afterwards published, and which the reader will find in the first volume of this work.

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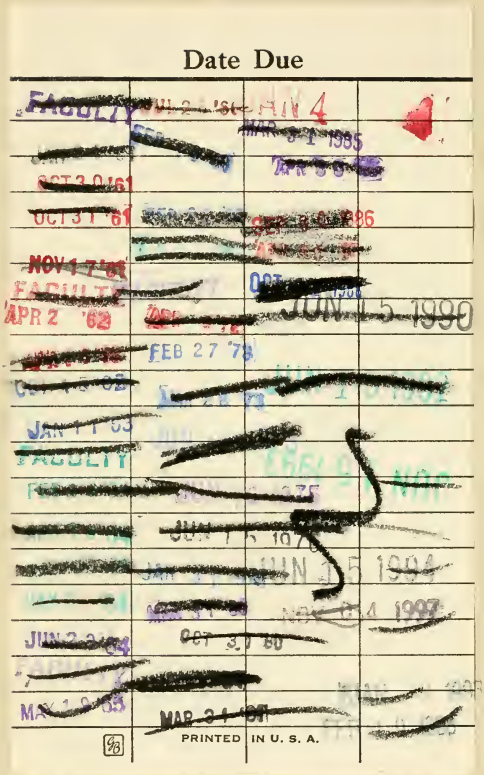
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